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October 22, 2018

Archbishop Christophe Pierre  
Apostolic Nuncio to the United States

Your Excellency,

My name is Donna F. Bethell and I am a life-long resident of Washington. I would like to request a meeting with you to discuss the appointment of a new Archbishop for Washington.

The other day I heard a well-founded report that Cardinal Tobin is the front-runner to succeed Cardinal Wuerl as Archbishop of Washington. As Cardinal Tobin should be a subject of the investigation by the USCCB into how ex-Cdl. McCarrick rose and who covered for him, I think it is a very bad idea to appoint him to anything until the investigation is complete. Also, as you know, the FBI has issued subpoenas to all the dioceses in Pennsylvania. The FBI investigates only federal cases, which necessarily means multi-state, which means they will be going across the line into New Jersey and Newark, following ex-Cdl. McCarrick's trail wherever it leads. Cdl. Tobin will have to deal with that, too.

On Friday I started a petition on [change.org](http://change.org), asking you not to support the appointment of Cdl. Tobin to Washington until the Bishops' investigation is complete. Here's the post on the petition: <https://www.change.org/p/archbishop-christophe-pierre-cardinal-tobin-must-not-be-made-archbishop-of-washington-before-investigation>:

Cardinal Joseph Tobin has been closely connected to former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, whom Pope Francis removed from the College of Cardinals because of his sexual assaults against minors, seminarians, and priests. Cardinal Tobin is Archbishop of Newark, which was McCarrick's archdiocese and which made a cash settlement to a lawsuit arising from then-Archbishop McCarrick's assault on a seminarian. Cardinal Tobin claims he knew nothing about ex-Cardinal McCarrick's crimes, although he heard rumors and didn't believe them. He should have asked a few questions and he would have learned that his own archdiocese had settled a lawsuit. In fact, on becoming Archbishop, he should have reviewed the history of sexual assault cases and lawsuits for the archdiocese. In effect, it appears that he joined the conspiracy of silence that enabled ex-Cardinal McCarrick's activities to remain hidden even as he enjoyed McCarrick's support in becoming Archbishop of Newark and a Cardinal.

The U.S. Bishops have asked Pope Francis for a full investigation of ex-Cardinal McCarrick's activities and how he rose in the Church. The Pope has not ordered such an investigation, so the Bishops are starting their own investigation. Now reports from Rome say Cardinal Tobin is being seriously considered for Archbishop of Washington. No one who might be implicated in that investigation as either covering up

or enabling ex-Cardinal McCarrick should be appointed to Washington until the investigation is complete.

This appointment is important not only for the residents of the Archdiocese of Washington. The Cardinal Archbishop of Washington is necessarily a leading prelate in the nation and in the whole Church. His voice will be heard and it can make a difference in the issues of faith and morals that are facing our Church today. We need a strong advocate of the Faith in this crucial position.

After less than three days, there are more than 1700 signers on my petition and I think we are just getting started. Today it is being picked up on Catholic websites and social media. Even if we can't actually influence a decision, I am gathering a cohort of people who care about what's happening in the Church and whom I can easily keep informed and mobilized to deal with whatever comes. You might know that an earlier petition started by a lady in Maryland to remove Cardinal Wuerl has more than 141,000 signers and still climbing: <https://www.change.org/p/pope-francis-remove-cardinal-wuerl-now>. If the comments she is getting are anything like mine, there are a lot of angry and frustrated Catholics. We are very eager to improve communications with the hierarchy which are now practically non-existent.

Your Excellency, I would be most grateful for anything you can do to help the people of Washington receive a good shepherd.

With prayers for your work, I am

Respectfully yours,

Donna F. Bethell