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WORKING  
TOGETHER  
TO PREVENT  
SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE

## **Immediate release**

### **Lynn's guilty verdict sends strong message**

ENOLA, Pa. – The National Sexual Violence Resource Center and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape are pleased to learn that Monsignor William J. Lynn will be held accountable for failing to protect children from sexually predatory priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

On Friday, a jury in Philadelphia found Lynn guilty of child endangerment. Lynn was charged with re-assigning priests who had been accused of sexual misconduct – including the Reverends James J. Brennan and Edward Avery – to other parishes. Avery admitted that he later sexually assaulted a 10-year-old boy in 1999; he has since been sentenced to prison. Brennan has denied the charge that he attempted to rape a 14-year-old boy in 1996. The same jury that ruled on Lynn is currently deadlocked on Brennan's case.

The NSVRC and PCAR applaud the jury's decision. The monsignor knew both Brennan and Avery had been accused of sexual misconduct, yet he still placed them in a position where they could abuse children.

Lynn's defense is that he didn't have the authority to defrock priests or keep them from serving, and that he was merely following the orders of the recently deceased Cardinal Anthony J. Bevilacqua.

But to say he was "just following orders" is no excuse. Lynn's desire to serve his superiors should have been secondary to his responsibility to those children who were assaulted. This verdict sends a powerful message to victims and their allies everywhere: The people at the top who allowed individuals to sexually abuse children will be held responsible.

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