

Hartford Courant – Editorial

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Church Near End In Abuse Files Fight

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport has lost yet another round in its stubborn fight to keep under lock and key thousands of pages of court files from lawsuits alleging sexual abuse of children by at least seven priests.

Tuesday, **U.S. Supreme Court** Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** denied the diocese's request to keep the documents sealed until the high court decides whether to take up the case in the fall.

But rather than accede to state court decisions insisting on the release of 12,600 pages of the files and to Justice Ginsburg's refusal to intervene, the diocese apparently will continue to rely on its failed policy of stonewalling and cover-up. Diocese lawyers are asking all nine justices to rule on the request.

Most of the lawsuits were filed in the 1990s. They were settled in 2001. News organizations, including The Courant, have been fighting to obtain the sealed files since 2002. The state Supreme Court has twice ruled that the documents should be unsealed.

Among the documents are depositions by then-Bishop **Edward Egan**, who was in charge of the Bridgeport Diocese when most of the lawsuits against priests under his control were filed and settled. Cardinal Egan recently retired as archbishop of **New York**. The current leader of the diocese is Bishop William Lori.

Release of the files could prove damaging to the reputations of current and former diocese officials, including Cardinal Egan. But that's no reason to keep them sealed. Releasing the documents would have a cathartic effect and in the long run be good for victims as well as the church.

Church officials should drop their objections. Let the sun shine in, Bishop Lori.