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Bishops address Boston report

WASHINGTON — Bishops mentioned in the Massachusetts attorney general's report on clergy sex abuse in the Archdiocese of Boston and now serving in dioceses across the country said they regretted any misjudgments that might have harmed children and committed themselves to safeguarding children from any further abuse.

But some of the bishops named in the report, released July 23, said it misrepresented their actions or knowledge about clergy sex abuse or assumed information that was not available at the time.

The 91-page report said at least 789 children were abused by 250 priests or other workers of the Archdiocese of Boston since 1940, which Massachusetts Attorney General Tom Reilly said showed a "massive, inexcusable failure of leadership" in the archdiocese.

"But that leadership is about to change, and we hope this report will draw a clear line between the past and a hopeful future," said Reilly at a Boston press conference held a week before the July 30 installation of Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley to head the Boston Archdiocese.

The report said evidence gathered during a 16-month criminal investigation "does not provide a basis for bringing criminal charges against the archdiocese or its senior managers."

"Although evidence gathered during the investigation establishes that senior archdiocese managers did not report suspected child sexual abuse to public authorities, the state's child abuse reporting law is not applicable because it was not expanded to

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Marge Bean walks toward the Massachusetts State House in Boston July 22 to protest the attorney general's decision not to file criminal charges against the Boston Archdiocese or its representatives in the clergy sexual-abuse scandal.

Story and photos by Catholic News Service

