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TN ATTORNEY GENERAL JONATHAN SKRMETTI JOINS MULTISTATE LETTER CONDEMNING LEAKED ANTI-CATHOLIC FBI MEMO

*Leaked internal document labeled Catholics “Violent Extremists” and targeted Catholic Virginians
because of their religious beliefs*

Nashville- Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti joined 19 other state attorneys general in sending a letter to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Christopher Wray and U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland condemning an anti-Catholic memorandum created by an analyst at the Richmond, Virginia FBI field office. The letter became public on February 8, 2023.

The memorandum identifies certain Catholics as potential threats due to their religious beliefs. Beliefs identified by the memo as problematic include including preference for a traditional Latin mass, skepticism of the actions of the Second Vatican Council, and criticism of the Pope. The attorneys general requested a full explanation of the memorandum’s origins, documents related to its implementation, information regarding how this memorandum has already affected Virginia’s Catholic population, and information on whether the FBI has begun infiltrating houses of worship in conflict with the FBI’s internal guidelines.

The memorandum distinguishes between what the FBI deems acceptable and unacceptable Catholic beliefs and practices. The memorandum suggests that the Catholic church includes “radical traditionalists” who could be “racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists.” It also suggests that the FBI should develop “sources with access” in “places of worship” – meaning that the FBI should start recruiting Catholics to spy on their fellow parishioners. The document is sourced with information from a widely discredited report issued by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

“I am proud to have worked with many honorable FBI agents and supervisors to prosecute sex traffickers, corrupt public officials, and violent white supremacists. The FBI does a lot of good work. But we have seen that, without fail, every time any part of the Bureau veers away from its core mission and works instead to enforce political orthodoxy, it brings shame to the agency and harms its ability to protect Americans,” General Skrmetti said.

The FBI has disavowed the document and launched an internal review.

General Skrmetti signed on to the letter led by Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares and joined by state attorneys general from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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