

Bubble-wrapped: Voice of the Faithful calls for replacements

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The top two officers at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops faced new pressure to relinquish their national posts in light of allegations related to sexual misconduct.

Voice of the Faithful (VOTF), a Boston-based lay reform group that claims 30,000 members, called for interim leaders to replace Bishop William Skylstad of Spokane, Washington, and Cardinal Francis George of Chicago in their respective roles as president and vice president of the bishops conference.

Skylstad faces allegations dating back to the early 1960s from a woman who says he sexually abused her as a minor. Skylstad has denied the allegations. In Chicago, George is facing heat for having failed to act on a panel's recommendation last October to remove a suspected pedophile from ministry. The accused priest, Daniel McCormack, was arrested in January.

At the bishops' headquarters, however, there were no signs of a shake-up. Spokesman Bill Ryan said nothing in the conference bylaws would require an officeholder to step down as a result of allegations.

"Both Bishop Skylstad and Cardinal George will be continuing with their duties as president and vice president of the conference," Ryan said. *-Religion News Service*