

145 YEARS OF BIGOTRY (AND COUNTING)

Anti-Catholic legislation was passed 145 years ago in Massachusetts to stop state aid from ever reaching parochial schools; other states passed similar laws at the time and have yet to rescind them. It was the infamous Know-Nothing Party that proposed this legislation in 1855. It's still on the books today (in the form of an amendment to the state constitution), which is why voucher programs stand no chance of winning in the commonwealth, unless the bigoted amendment is stricken by the courts. So far, no luck.

Back in the 1850s, when members of the Know Nothing party were asked by the authorities who they were, they replied that they knew nothing. This at least made them more honest than their contemporaries; now the anti-school choice crowd pretends to know something about constitutional law. Not that they're ignorant altogether: what they do know is how to demagogue the public. So it is that people actually believe that if the amendment were tossed, the public schools would come tumbling down (that this is happening through a process of natural erosion seems not to have been noticed).

In May, a proposal to use state funds for parochial schools lost in both houses of the Massachusetts legislature. But the fighting continues with more appeals to the courts. We are delighted that the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty is fighting the good fight for justice.

In a time when Southern states are downgrading the significance of the confederate flag, it is ironic that one of the most "progressive" states in the union refuses to junk the bigoted-driven language found in its own constitution. What this means is that those won't tolerate allegedly racist symbols in other states are perfectly willing to tolerate

anti-Catholic traditions in their own. That they do this in shameless fashion is positively Clintonesque.