

AMICUS BRIEF FILED IN OHIO VOUCHER CASE

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has filed an amicus curiae brief before the U.S. Supreme Court in the Ohio voucher case, *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*. Filing the brief for the Catholic League is Gerard Bradley, professor of law at the University of Notre Dame; professor Robert P. George of Princeton is counsel of record. Both professors are members of the league's board of advisors and Bradley chairs the league's legal advisory committee.

The Ohio legislature approved a voucher program in 1995 that allows Cleveland students \$2,250 a year to attend a private school; it is targeted at low-income families. Citing the large number of families that opted to send their children to Catholic schools, the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last year upheld a previous ruling that the program was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court will settle the dispute this term.

The league's brief contends that "The decision of the Sixth Circuit should be reversed because it depended upon the District Court's characterization of the Catholic schools involved as 'pervasively sectarian.'" It is the position of the Catholic League that this characterization is mistaken because "It rests upon a grave misunderstanding of Catholic doctrine on education, on religious freedom, and of the mission and purpose of Catholic schools."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the league's friend-of-the-court brief today:

"The invocation that Catholic schools are 'pervasively sectarian' is one of the most hideous contemporary examples of religious profiling in the nation. It conjures up the very

worst nativistic fears and thus contributes to anti-Catholicism. It is high time the high court put this bogeyman to rest. That is why it is important to reverse the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision: more is at stake than simply offering the poor the right to send their children to the school of their choice."