

ARIZONA GOVERNOR OPPOSES BAN ON SANTA; STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL DEFENDS IT

Arizona Governor Jane Hull called Catholic League president William Donohue yesterday thanking him for notifying her of the ban on Santa Claus in public areas of the Attorney General's office. The ban is the result of a memo written by attorney Gale Garriott, chief counsel of the Agency Counsel Division of the Arizona Attorney General's office. Defending the ban is Attorney General Janet Napolitano. She justified the ban by saying that her office constitutes a "people's lobby" that does not allow displays that might offend those of various "faiths and cultures."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Arizona Governor Jane Hull is a model of reasonableness. She not only understands that the ban on Santa is 'idiocy,' she is baffled (as we are) that given the events of 9-11 why anyone would want to censor freedom of expression—of such an innocent kind—during the holiday season. Unfortunately, the state's attorney general supports censorship.

"It is important to note that there is absolutely nothing in either federal or state law that requires Attorney General Janet Napolitano to support a ban on the display of Santa Claus in her 'people's lobby.' It is purely a matter of her desire: she has a preference for certain types of gag rules.

"It is a ruse to say that some might be offended by Santa. Many more are offended by his absence. And what exactly is Napolitano going to say to those who say they are offended by pictures of Martin Luther King in her lobby next month? Is she going to take down the pictures in deference to those who

are offended or is she going to brand those who object as bigots? What she refuses to recognize is that anyone who is offended by either the display of Santa, or by pictures of Martin Luther King, in her People's Republic of Arizona lobby, is, in fact, a bigot. And by definition that would certainly include her."