

BIGOTRY EMBROILS TWO STATES: CONNECTICUT AND WISCONSIN

Anti-Catholicism has gripped two states: Connecticut and Wisconsin. In Connecticut, an anti-Catholic judge is being considered for the top post as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; in Wisconsin, a Trump nominee for a federal judgeship is being opposed on anti-Catholic grounds.

The Catholic League has been actively engaged in both cases. As we went to press, the outcome in both instances was inconclusive.

The Connecticut case involves Supreme Court Judge Andrew McDonald. We are opposing him because of what he did in 2011 when he was a state senator.

At that time, McDonald introduced a bill with Rep. Michael Lawlor that would have allowed state officials to take over the administrative and fiscal decisions of the Catholic Church in Connecticut. It authorized lay Catholics in each parish to run internal affairs, stripping the pastor of his duties.

As Bill Donohue said in March 2011, this was “payback” time. “This brutal act of revenge by Lawlor and McDonald, two champions of gay marriage,” Donohue wrote, “is designed to muzzle the voice of the Catholic Church.”

Donohue called for their ouster, saying, “They have evinced a bias so strong, and so malicious, that it compromises their ability to serve the public good. They should therefore be expelled by their colleagues.”

They were not, but they didn’t win, either. We stood firm with Bridgeport Archbishop William Lori (now the Archbishop of Baltimore) in defeating this power grab. They backed off.

McDonald got an "unsatisfactory" rating from the Joint Judiciary Committee but survived a one-vote margin in the full House. The Senate will decide his fate. We blitzed the Connecticut media opposing him on the basis of his anti-Catholicism (we did not oppose him because he was gay).

In Wisconsin, a former federal prosecutor, Gordon Giampietro, has been nominated for the federal district court in Milwaukee. He has come under fire for holding to Catholic teachings on marriage, the family, and sexuality. None of his comments were outside the domain of settled Catholic theology, which is why Wisconsin bishops supported him.

Donohue wrote to Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin saying that Giampietro has been the victim of a smear campaign; she is wavering in her support of him. He said he understood why some might disagree with Catholic teachings on specific subjects, but "just as it is wrong to tar those who disagree with us as bigots, it is just as wrong for others to make such a charge about us."

The fate of Giampietro, like that of McDonald, is still in doubt. We will report on both cases next month.