

BIGOTRY MARKS AD ON CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

The Fairness Foundation, an Indiana-based non-profit, is waging a TV and radio ad campaign in Chicago and Washington, D.C. against Catholic hospitals. The foundation, which was founded to represent the interests of the medically uninsured, is led by J. Patrick Rooney, a businessman and philanthropist who operates a private health company; the foundation is critical of the billing practices of non-profit hospitals.

The ad comes at a time when Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan is supporting legislation that would mandate non-profit hospitals to tighten their billing and collection procedures. She also wants to force these institutions to contribute more to charities, lest they risk their tax-exempt status.

The ad says how regrettable it is that the Attorney General had to get involved, "but as with other immoral actions," it concludes, "apparently the church needs to be forced by lawyers to do the right thing, to be moral. How sad."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"What is really sad is that an organization which stands to benefit by punishing not-for-profit hospitals is running anti-Catholic ads in the name of helping the uninsured. And it's not just this one ad that gives away the anti-Catholic bigotry of this group: wherethemoneygoes.com is another Fairness Foundation project, and it is strewn with bigotry.

"For example, the website lambastes Wheaton Franciscan Services for making allegedly exorbitant profits. 'Maybe the Church should ask them to help the schools, or pay for the high priced lawyers who defend accused priests in the sex scandals....' It even questions whether there are too many

Catholics on the Supreme Court.

“Rooney has a stellar reputation for helping the Catholic poor. That is why he should pull these bigoted ads immediately. Either that or rename his foundation.”