

Bill Donohue: IRS Targeted Catholic League

By Bill Donohue

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The problems with the IRS extend beyond playing politics with conservative groups seeking a tax-exempt status. I have never made this public before, but given the heightened interest in the way the IRS has conducted itself, the time has come to disclose what happened.

Just weeks after Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, I was notified by the IRS that the Catholic League was under investigation for violating the IRS Code on political activities as it relates to 501(c)(3) organizations. What the IRS did not know was that I had proof who contacted them to launch the investigation: Catholics United, a George Soros-funded Catholic organization.

The IRS was contacted on June 5, 2008, to launch a probe of the Catholic League, and the letter sent to me was dated Nov. 24, 2008. The June 5 letter was sent to the IRS by lawyers from Catholics United; it was mailed to Director Marsha Ramirez, director of Exempt Organizations Examinations, and to Lois G. Lerner, director of EO Division.

The “evidence” against me was nothing more than news releases and articles I had written during the presidential campaign on various issues. The lawyers also asked the IRS to question the source of new funding we had received, implying that we received illegal contributions.

The timing is not coincidental. On Oct. 20, I issued a news release, “George Soros Funds Catholic Left,” and on Oct. 23, I wrote another one, “Catholic Left Scandal Mounts”; both

mentioned Catholics United. The same day, Oct. 23, I was asked to go on CNN, and when Catholics United found out, they contacted the station trying to spike the interview.

The person who did this was the head of Catholics United, Chris Korzen. He said I was not "an authentic Catholic commentator and representative of the Catholic Church," and that they should either drop me altogether or put me on with Alexia Kelley of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (Catholics United is listed on the 990 of Catholics in Alliance as a related organization; Soros greases this group, and by extension, Catholics United).

The bid to keep me off TV failed. But here's the key: Korzen was dumb enough to share with CNN the complaint issued by his group to the IRS. The document, which was leaked to me by someone at CNN, matches up extraordinarily well with the IRS complaint of Nov. 24.

In the end, the IRS concluded that although the Catholic League had "intervened in a political campaign," it was "unintentional, isolated, non-egregious and non-recurring"; our tax-exempt status remained intact. This is false: I intentionally addressed political issues, and did not intervene in the campaign, unless, of course, my freedom to speak about political issues is a violation of the IRS Code. If that is the case, then this IRS unit should fold.

So the problem extends beyond the IRS. It extends to left-wing activists, funded by left-wing tycoons, all for the purpose of silencing conservatives. It's time someone was held accountable for this obscene political game.

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