

# BISHOPS NEED NO LECTURES FROM CONSERVATIVE LEGAL GROUP

Judicial Watch, a conservative legal organization, is upset with the current composition of the National Review Board that has been appointed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to monitor clergy sexual abuse. Citing the resignation of Frank Keating as the head of the panel, Judicial Watch objects to having Robert S. Bennett and Leon Panetta as board members.

The objection centers on Bennett's role as personal legal counsel to former President Bill Clinton and Panetta's job as White House Chief of Staff. In a news release dated June 23, Bennett and Panetta are referred to as follows: "Two Board Members Facilitated & Defended President Clinton's Sex Crimes." Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton went further accusing them of qualifying as "a 'who's who' of cover-up experts, not for membership on the bishops' National Review Board for combating sexual abuse, or maybe that's the point?"

Catholic League president William Donohue wasn't amused:

"Judicial Watch must be lost. It describes itself as 'the public interest group that investigates and prosecutes government corruption and abuse.' Why, then, the sudden interest in the affairs of the Catholic Church? Is there no more corruption and abuse left in Washington?"

"Though this may come as a surprise to Judicial Watch, Bob Bennett and Leon Panetta were appointed to the National Review Board a year ago. They work for the bishops, not the federal government. Thus it is no more the business of Judicial Watch to lecture Catholic bishops about the composition of its own watchdog group than it is for them to lecture the clergy of any religion about its internal affairs.

"One more point: we don't need any snide remarks about the

'cover-up' qualifications for membership on the panel."