

# BISHOPS STAND TALL

On April 12, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the start of a religious freedom campaign.

It is the most comprehensive and cogent defense of religious liberty ever drafted by the bishops in the United States. Erudite and wide-ranging, it is clarion call to the Catholic community, and beyond, to get serious about religious rights, both at home and abroad.

While the Obama administration's decision to try to force Catholic non-profits to pay for services it deems immoral was the final straw, the statement drew attention to many other current threats to religious liberty. The bishops addressed not only specific issues, but their source.

It also registered disapproval of attempts to dumb-down religious liberty. Freedom of worship, they rightly said, was not the same as religious liberty; nor will we settle for it. Freedom of worship implies an insular exercise, such as praying in a church; religious liberty has a broader focus, one that speaks to the public expression of religion. We are not about to let those in government box us in, confining our religious rights to merely private matters.

Threats to religious liberty extend beyond government. For example, when Christian clubs on campus are told they cannot restrict leadership positions to Christians, that is a direct assault on religious liberty.

The bishops are serious about this campaign, and they have the unreserved support of the Catholic League.