

# BISHOPS START RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMITTEE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the decision by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to establish a Religious Liberty Committee:

The president of the USCCB, New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, has announced the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty; Bridgeport Bishop William Lori will chair the committee. Dolan lists six reasons why the new group is being launched:

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is seeking to force private healthcare providers to carry contraceptive and sterilization services
- HHS wants to force the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services to provide "the full range of reproductive services"
- The federal government is seeking to force international relief programs to offer reproductive health services
- The Department of Justice is attacking the Defense of Marriage Act, arguing that support for marriage is a form of bigotry
- The Justice Department is attacking a religious liberty known as the ministerial exception; it insulates religious employers from state encroachment
- New York State recently legalized gay marriage, providing a very narrow religious exemption

With the exception of the last concern, all of the others reflect the policies of the Obama administration. To say that this administration disrespects religious liberty is too kind—it shows nothing but contempt for the "First Freedom."

Bishop Lori knows first-hand how contemptuous government can be of religious liberty—he fought a prospective state takeover

of the administrative affairs of the Catholic Church in Connecticut. Archbishop Dolan is also no novice: he has fought anti-Catholic bigotry for years. The Catholic League has worked with both bishops before, and looks forward to assisting them again.