

BLOOMBERG BACKS RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

In 2002, the Bronx Household of Faith, an inner-city Christian church, won a ruling in federal district court maintaining that it has a right to hold religious services on Sundays in a New York City public school. But now the Bloomberg administration is going to challenge this ruling in court, citing separation of church and state concerns.

Catholic League president William Donohue today accused Mayor Michael Bloomberg of supporting religious discrimination:

“All over the United States, public schools are utilized after school hours by every conceivable community group. Moreover, the courts have repeatedly said that religious groups cannot be discriminated against in having access to public facilities. But Mayor Bloomberg disagrees: he wants to deny religious groups the same rights afforded secular groups. In the name of diversity, he wants to destroy the diversity that the Bronx Household of Faith brings to New York.

“To support religious discrimination in an election year is a very dicey proposition for Mayor Bloomberg. Already in trouble with many New Yorkers for his personal support of gay marriage, Bloomberg now risks alienating the ranks of the faithful even further. Traditional Catholics and Orthodox Jews, as well as Protestants, know what is at stake—religious liberty for all religions. That is why this issue transcends the interests of the Bronx Household of Faith.

“It is not likely that Mayor Bloomberg will succeed in the courts. But one thing is for sure—he has just ignited a firestorm that will surely burn him in the court of public opinion.”