

# BLOOMBERG BECKONS FIGHT WITH CATHOLICS

When New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that he was going to march in this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade up Fifth Avenue, his press secretary, Edward Skyler, was asked to explain why. At issue was the mayor's appearance at an event that excludes gays from marching under their own banner. Skyler said, "The mayor believes the best way to change an organization is to do so from within."

This didn't sit too well with us. Which is why the following response was made available to the media:

"Who does Michael Bloomberg think he is? If he wants to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, fine. But he should do so by respecting the house rules of the parade's organizers. Gays are treated the same way pro-life Catholics are treated: both are banned from marching under their own banner but neither is excluded from marching, per se. If Bloomberg doesn't agree with the courts on this issue, then he should stay on the sidelines and state his reasoning.

"This issue revolves around three liberties: freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion. Regarding the latter liberty, it is outrageous that a government figure would seek to subvert an Irish-Catholic organization's autonomy (hasn't Bloomberg heard of separation of church and state?). Indeed, Bloomberg's interest in marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade so he can change the will of the parade's organizers is manipulative and unethical. That is why he should do as he did last year and pull a no-show."

It remains to be seen whether the two Senators from New York, Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton, will march in the parade.

We're monitoring this one carefully.