

BOB SHRUM THROWS MUD AT BISHOPS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an article posted today on TheWeek.com by Democratic consultant Bob Shrum:

Shrum begins his [article](#) with a broadside against Democrat Bart Stupak, the congressman whose amendment in the House version of the health care bill bans abortion coverage. Shrum makes the patently false claim that Stupak's amendment "prevents Americans from purchasing abortion coverage with their own money." As Stupak wrote last month in the *New York Times*, "The amendment does not prevent private plans from offering abortion services and it does not prohibit women from purchasing abortion coverage with their own money." Now if Shrum has evidence that Stupak is lying, he ought to present it.

Shrum gets nasty when he takes issue with Stupak's religiously informed conscience. He contrasts Stupak unfavorably with Ted Kennedy and Mario Cuomo, both of whom earned their hero status by thumbing their noses at Catholic teachings on abortion. Then he lays into the bishops for interfering in politics by criticizing two other Catholic dissidents, John Kerry and Joe Biden. He is at his demagogic best when he plays the anti-Catholic card by suggesting the bishops are hostile to democracy; watch out, he warns, they might even push to outlaw divorce!

Shrum really gets down and dirty when he slanders all Catholic bishops. "Having abetted thousands of priests in molesting children, they're now set on abusing health reform," he writes. Now if the standard of discourse allows for this kind of commentary, it finishes the prospects for civil conversation. Imagine an opponent of gay marriage citing gay

leaders who abet the frequent use of bathhouses, the lethal sex acts that take place there, and the diseases they generate. Any group can be smeared.

Shrum needs to apologize for this scurrilous piece. He can't fight the bishops on the merits of the issue, so he resorts to mud throwing as a way to silence them. We look to responsible Democrats who disagree with the bishops on this issue to denounce Shrum for his despicable behavior.