

BOB SHRUM THROWS MUD AT THE BISHOPS

In a recent article posted on TheWeek.com, Democratic consultant Bob Shrum took a shot at the Catholic bishops.

Shrum began the article by bashing Bart Stupak, the congressman whose amendment in the House version of the health care bill bans abortion coverage. Shrum falsely claimed that Stupak's amendment "prevents Americans from purchasing abortion coverage with their own money." As Stupak recently wrote 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."

Shrum got nasty when he took issue with Stupak's religiously informed conscience. He contrasted Stupak unfavorably with Ted Kennedy and Mario Cuomo, both of whom thumbed their noses at Catholic teachings on abortion. Then he laid into the bishops for interfering in politics by criticizing two other Catholic dissidents, John Kerry and Joe Biden. He was at his demagogic best when he played the anti-Catholic card by suggesting the bishops are hostile to democracy, warning that they may even push to outlaw divorce.

Shrum got really dirty when he slandered all Catholic bishops: "Having abetted thousands of priests in molesting children, they're now set on abusing health reform." 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.

We called for an apology. Shrum couldn't fight the bishops on the merits of the issue, so he resorted to mud throwing to silence them.