

# CAN PRO-LIFE CATHOLICS BE MADE JUDGES?

On July 6, the Senate will hold a six-hour discussion on the nomination of J. Leon Holmes to the federal bench; a vote will follow. Holmes was nominated by President George W. Bush over a year ago to be a district judge for the eastern district of Arkansas. His nomination has been held up by the Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Catholic League president William Donohue urged the committee to vote for Holmes on the basis of his qualifications:

“Senator Patrick Leahy jumped down the throat of Vice President Dick Cheney this week for allegedly being tagged an anti-Catholic by some Republicans; the vice president then denounced Leahy with an obscenity. What continues to irritate Leahy is the fact that he, along with his fellow Catholic pro-abortion colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Dick Durbin and Ted Kennedy, have been criticized for subjecting pro-life Catholics like Leon Holmes to a *de facto* religious test. To be specific, when Holmes was considered for the federal bench last year, Leahy, Durbin and Kennedy, along with non-Catholics like Chuck Schumer, ganged up on Holmes because of his orthodox Catholic beliefs.

“When this issue first arose, the Catholic League made it clear that we were not accusing any senator of being anti-Catholic. But we hastened to add that religious profiling, even when indirectly invoked, was anathema. In the case of Leon Holmes, some of the Democrats are upset with a biblical remark the judge previously made about gender roles. They would have been on more persuasive grounds had they been able to point to a single instance when the private religious beliefs of Holmes had unfairly colored his ability to render a fair judgment. Their failure to do so speaks volumes.

"If Leahy and company want to rid themselves of the charge that they have made it all but impossible for orthodox Catholics to get on the federal bench, they have a grand opportunity on Tuesday to do just that. They can vote for Holmes on the basis of his credentials, and nothing more."