

CATHOLIC FOSTER CARE IN D.C. FORCED OUT

As reported in today's *Washington Post*, Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Washington has ended its foster-care program. At issue was the right of the archdiocese to reject gay marriage and remain a city contractor; a bill legalizing same-sex marriage recently passed in the District.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue supports the archdiocese:

Archbishop Donald Wuerl is a man of principle and prudence: he did not want to end the foster-care program, but he was left with no realistic option. District lawmakers could have granted the kind of religious exemptions that would have ensured a continuation of services, but instead they sought to create a Catch-22 situation for the archdiocese. Surely they knew that Archbishop Wuerl was not going to negotiate Catholic Church teachings on marriage, yet that hardly mattered to them. The real losers are the children who were served by the Catholic Church.

Those who say that Wuerl is throwing the kids overboard are phonies. If Planned Parenthood were told that as a condition of public funding it had to refer Catholic women having second thoughts about abortion to a crisis pregnancy center, it would scream violation of church and state, refuse the money and end this program. Well, Archbishop Wuerl isn't about to allow the state to run roughshod over Catholic doctrine, and that is why he is being forced to drop the foster-care program.

Prudent lawmakers interested in balancing church and state interests and servicing children would not seek to impose secular views on sectarian institutions. But that's not what D.C. legislators opted to do, leaving Archbishop Wuerl with no

realistic alternative.