

CATHOLIC HOSPITALS DESERVE RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION

The Connecticut legislature's Public Health Committee is considering a bill that would require all hospitals in the state, including four Roman Catholic ones, to provide emergency contraception to rape victims. The Connecticut Catholic Conference is asking for a religious exemption for Catholic hospitals.

Catholic League president William Donohue wrote the following letter today to members of the Public Health Committee asking them to accede to the Catholic Conference's request:

Dear Connecticut Lawmaker:

Requiring Roman Catholic hospitals to abide by state strictures on the distribution of emergency contraception ineluctably violates both the religious liberty provision of the First Amendment and the establishment provision, and that is why I am urging you to reject such an appeal

A Catholic institution cannot be considered Catholic if it is mandated to yield its religious prerogatives to the state. It is only just that the time-honored exemption afforded religious institutions in matters like this be affirmed. Not to do so sets up a judicial battle that will drain the resources of both sides, the likely outcome of which will be to respect the First Amendment right of Catholic hospitals to maintain their autonomy.

Finally, there is no evidence that the current practice of having Catholic hospitals make referrals to other hospitals isn't working. In other words, on the basis of legal, religious, moral and practical grounds, the case to provide an exemption to Catholic hospitals is decisive.