

# Catholic League charges NY Assistant Atty General with abuse of office

The Catholic League has charged the Assistant Attorney General for the State of New York with abusing his office by organizing and participating in a Gay and Lesbian law forum.

In an open letter to state Attorney General Oliver Koppel, Catholic League president William A. Donohue spelled out the League's complaint:

*Dear Attorney General Koppel:*

*I am writing to register a complaint against the abuse of your office by Jim Williams, Assistant Attorney General for New York State. Please be advised that this is an open letter; many in the media have or will receive a copy of it.*

*Last weekend, February 26th and 27th, Fordham University Law School hosted a 23-panel symposium entitled "Lesbian and Gay Law 1994." The person who arranged the event was Jim Williams. He not only organized the symposium, he did it during office hours while in the employ of your office. Here's how I know.*

*Listed in the New York Law Journal of February 23rd was a short column entitled "Program to Review Gay, Lesbian Issues." The column advertised the Fordham Law symposium, stating that the program was sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Law Association of Greater New York (LeGaL), the law school's Gay and Lesbian Law Association and the Fordham Urban Law Journal. Additional information, the piece said, may be obtained from Jim Williams, president of LeGaL, at 416- 8714. That number, Mr. Koppel, is the number for your office.*

*The content of my complaint should now be obvious. By what right – legal or moral – does Mr. Williams have in using the*

resources of New York State to organize his private agenda? Worse, what right does Mr. Williams have to use his office time -funded by the taxpayers of New York State – to orchestrate a meeting that is explicitly designed to affect the status of legislation in New York State? I conveyed my objections to Mr. Williams but he seemed unimpressed. I hope you aren't. This is more than an impropriety, it is a direct conflict o f interest.

For the record, it should be known that Mr. Williams' involvement in the symposium went beyond that of an organizer: he was an active participant in the proeedings. On February 27th, Mr. Williams sat on two panels: "Litigating Lesbian and Gay Employment Issues Under City, State and Federal Law" and "Advocating for Rights in the Workplace. " Both of these areas of law involve very sensitive issues. It is an outrage that those who are sworn to enforce the law should so maneuver their public office to service partisan political objectives.

Mr. Williams has shown a callous disregard for law, ethics and the taxpayers of New York. The public interest, I hope you will agree, cannot be served by those who have such an obvious disregard for it.

I look forward to hearing from you about this matter.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

Dr. Donohue is filing a complaint with the New York State Ethics Commission as well.