

# CATHOLIC LEAGUE SUPPORTS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AMENDMENT

On July 23, Catholic League president William Donohue will testify before the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the House Committee on the Judiciary on a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Religious Freedom Amendment, which is being proposed by Congressman Henry Hyde, reads as follows: "In order to secure the right of the people to acknowledge and serve God according to the dictates of conscience, neither the United States nor any State shall deny any person equal access to a benefit, or otherwise discriminate against any person, on account of religious belief, expression or exercise. This amendment does not authorize government to coerce or inhibit religious belief, expression or exercise."

William Donohue explained why the Catholic League is backing the amendment:

"The central reason why the Catholic League is endorsing the Religious Freedom Amendment is quite simple: we believe that in the past few decades a number of court decisions and administrative orders have been passed that are inimical to religious freedom, the result of which has been a diminution of First Amendment guarantees. We do not seek to amend the First Amendment, rather we seek to restore the status quo ante, that is the condition that was outlined by the Framers of the Constitution and was found acceptable by the courts for most of our nation's history. In short, we want our rights back.

"There is nothing in the amendment that would coerce anyone from observing any religion, and that is how it should be. What we are looking for is not special treatment but an end to the two-class system we have at the moment where secular expression is given preferential treatment over religious

expression.”

Donohue will offer several examples of governmental bias against religious expression in his testimony.

The Catholic League is the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends individual Catholics and the institutional Church from defamation and discrimination.