

# CATHOLICS UNITED SOWS DIVISION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the debate between Catholics United and the Susan B. Anthony List (SBA List):

On one side of the dispute is a dissident Catholic group which seeks to criminalize speech, and on the other side is a pro-life group which represents the position of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and has the support of the ACLU. Moreover, the dissident Catholic group, Catholics United, is taking a direct shot at the bishops by claiming, in effect, that the USCCB got it wrong when it concluded that abortion funding was contained in the health care bill.

Two years ago, Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput accused Catholics United of doing a “disservice to the Church.” He was right. Now the group is seeking to censor the speech of the SBA List, claiming it is misrepresenting the record of Rep. Steve Driehaus: the SBA List says that when Driehaus voted for the health care bill, he voted to support “taxpayer-funded abortion”; it sought to launch a billboard campaign alerting voters about this, but was challenged by Catholics United saying that the SBA List was guilty of making “false statements” in campaign advertising. The dispute, which is before the Ohio Elections Commission, will not be resolved until after the election; if the SBA List loses, it faces criminal charges.

Catholics United is saying that Francis Cardinal George, the head of the USCCB, got it wrong when he said the health care bill “appropriates billions of dollars in new funding without explicitly prohibiting the use of these funds for abortion.” It further maintains that a unanimous opinion of the legal experts advising the bishops got it wrong when they came to

the same conclusion as Cardinal George. And it also claims that the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service got it wrong when it concluded that abortion funding is allowed under the bill.

It is clear that Catholics United wants to muzzle the free speech of the SBA List and is actively undermining the bishops.

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