

# CENSORING VATICAN WEBSITE CANNOT STAND

Jody Ian Goeler, who is the Superintendent of Schools for Regional School District 14 in Connecticut, was forced to respond to accusations that the Vatican website was blocked in district schools because it promotes “hate speech.”

In the letter that Donohue issued to Superintendent Goeler, he asked Goeler to “please identify examples of ‘hate speech’ found on the Vatican’s website.” Goeler responded by saying that he never “stated or implied anywhere that the Vatican website promotes or has examples of hate speech.” This resolves nothing. In a public letter that was released, Goeler admitted that access is provided to liberal websites, but not conservative ones. Nowhere does he address the issue of censoring the Vatican (Islamic sites were okay).

Goeler would have us believe that some kind of technological glitch is at work; he asked the filtering service provider, Dell SonicWALL, for an explanation. But this condition is not a technological fluke—it was the work of a left-wing ideologue. Goeler’s big mistake was to state his tolerance for intolerance. “The district is trying to determine the reason for the inconsistency and *if bias is pervasive enough to justify switching to another content filtering provider.*” (My italics.)

Donohue spent 20 years in education, 16 as a professor, and he cannot believe that any seasoned educator would make such a remarkable comment. Goeler would have us believe that before he could rule on this matter, he needed to know if the “bias is pervasive enough to justify switching.” Just how many websites of a “conservative”—or for that matter a “liberal”—nature have to be blocked to merit a change? And how many Catholic websites have to be censored before action is

taken? The man is not suitable to work in education.

The Catholic League took this issue to Stefan Pryor, who is the Commissioner of the State Department of Education in Connecticut. This is a serious matter. Abridging the First Amendment can only be allowed when there is some competing interest of overriding importance. Stopping students from accessing the Vatican's website is not one of them.