

CHURCH'S CRITICS WANT GAG RULE

Getting Nancy Pelosi to accept a health care bill that bans federal funding of abortion was the greatest victory scored by the U.S. bishops in a generation. It also unleashed an attempt to censor them. Among them was Geoffrey Stone of the Huffington Post.

Stone found it troubling that the bishops were so vocal. He yearned for a time when JFK was president, a time when separation of church and state met his approval. Perhaps the Chicago law professor forgot about Rev. Martin Luther King, the minister who took to the pulpit and lobbied for civil rights in the name of free speech and religious liberty. Should King have been muzzled as well? Or did Stone just want to silence today's bishops?

Here are some others who would like to censor the bishops: Rep. Lynn Woolsey, Rep. Diane DeGette, Rep. Patrick Kennedy, Frances Kissling, Planned Parenthood, Feminist Majority, Catholics for Choice, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the National Organization for Women, and many others favored a gag rule.

Nancy Snyderman of MSNBC spoke for many when she said that "This is going to be a Pollyannaish statement. The Catholic bishops appearing and having a political voice seems to be a most fundamental violation of church and state."

There were a number of religious groups that wanted abortion coverage in the health care bill, including: Episcopal Church, Union for Reform Judaism, Central Conference of American Rabbis, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Unitarian Universalist, Presbyterian Church (USA), Lutheran Women's Caucus and the YWCA.

So why didn't Stone and company want to silence these groups as well? Let's face it: they don't have a principled bone in their collective bodies.