

D.C. COUNCIL SPONSORS ANTI-CATHOLIC INTOLERANCE

The Washington, D.C. Council has passed a bill mandating health insurance coverage of contraceptives without a provision exempting Catholic hospitals and employers on religious grounds. The bill would mandate that Catholic institutions based in Washington such as the United States Catholic Conference, the Catholic University of America and Catholic parishes provide contraceptive coverage to employees. During debate on the bill, which passed 13-0, council member Jim Graham called the Catholic Church homophobic and urged his colleagues against “deferring to Rome” according to the *Washington Post*.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the situation:

“Auxiliary Bishop William Lori is absolutely right when he says this is ‘evidence of anti-Catholic bigotry of the unreconstructed kind.’ We are calling on the D.C. Council to reconsider the bill. This is a blatant example of the state imposing its will on religion. The American Medical Association recently refused to compel Catholic hospitals to provide certain contraceptive and reproductive procedures. Even the plan covering federal employees contains a ‘conscience clause.’ We are not interested in imposing Catholic views on public health care. We would appreciate the same consideration. If the council does not reconsider, we will appeal to Congress to exercise its oversight of council action.

“We are also calling for the censure and resignation of councilman Jim Graham. A public office holder cannot betray the public trust. The language he used out-Joneses Bob Jones University. To those in Washington outraged about Bob Jones,

we await your furor in this matter. Councilman Graham crossed from speech into action. This should concern all members of Congress."