

D.C. GAY MARRIAGE BILL FLAWED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue takes issue with those who are critical of the Archdiocese of Washington for rejecting the D.C. bill on gay marriage:

When the bill to promote homosexual marriage was first introduced in D.C., the Archdiocese of Washington was fine with it. That's because it protected the right of churches and other houses of worship not to perform gay marriages. But then gay overreach took place: the language was changed to narrow the religious liberty protections. Because the archdiocese fears that the new language could be used to force it to provide health benefits to gay couples, and allow for gay adoption, it said it could not abide by the revised bill. In practical terms, this means that Catholic Charities would suspend its city services, a move that would terminate its medical clinics, foster care and adoption services, tutoring for GED tests, mental health services, homeless shelters, etc.

The reaction from the Church's critics has not only been harsh, it has been over the top. "What the Church is doing is an uncharitable and cruel maneuver," wrote Petula Dvorak in the *Washington Post*. In the Huffington Post, Allison Kilkenny concluded that "If gay folk can marry, the Catholic church refuses to feed the homeless." Adele M. Stan at AlterNet said that this decision, along with the bishops' opposition to a health care bill that offered abortion coverage, "serve the bishops' obsession with the sex lives and reproductive organs of others." She showed her true colors when she opined, "As an institution, it [the Catholic Church] ranks among the world's most sexually dysfunctional."

If Alabama Governor George Wallace had told the Archdiocese of Mobile that as a condition of receiving state aid for social services it had to cease performing interracial marriages, few would have criticized the archdiocese for exercising its

doctrinal prerogatives. Indeed, it may even have been applauded for doing so. Now it should not matter what the issue is that the Church decides it cannot in good conscience support—what should matter is its First Amendment religious liberty right to do so. The unprincipled, of course, cannot understand such logic.