

DUAL SYSTEM OF JUSTICE IN NEW YORK STATE?

The following is an open letter by Catholic League president Bill Donohue to New York State lawmakers:

Complaints have reached my office about some New York State lawmakers who are considering a bill, sponsored by Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, that would discriminate against the Catholic Church by selectively targeting private institutions in legislation aimed at prosecuting the sexual abuse of minors. There is another bill on the same issue, sponsored by Assemblyman Vito Lopez, which does not discriminate: it treats private and public institutions the same way. While there are some differences between the two bills, the central difference is in their application.

Please understand that I am not accusing anyone who supports the Markey bill of anti-Catholicism. But I hasten to add that those who do so are certainly giving the appearance of sponsoring bigotry. Perception, it is often said, is reality.

Alabama Governor George Wallace was known for promoting a dual system of justice—one for whites and one for blacks. It is no less invidious to promote a dual system of justice based on other grounds. If a child has been violated, what matters is the crime, not the location.

Anyone who is really serious about prosecuting the sexual abuse of minors wants all victimizers to be treated equally. I hope you agree.

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Contact Lopez: LopezV@assembly.state.ny.us