

# DURBIN DECLINES AWARD; YIELDS TO PRESSURE

One day after the Catholic League asked its email subscribers to contact Sen. Dick Durbin to decline the “Lifetime Achievement Award” that he was scheduled to receive from the Archdiocese of Chicago, he did just that.

The first person to raise a red flag over this issue was Thomas Paprocki, Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield. He honed in on Durbin’s pro-abortion voting record. He quickly received the support of San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone; eight other bishops followed. We chose to direct our attention to Sen. Durbin, allowing the clergy to deal with the clergy.

The Catholic League was the only lay Catholic organization in the nation to press Sen. Durbin to decline the award.

On September 23, Bill Donohue sent a letter to Sen. Durbin in the overnight mail—it was received the next morning—asking him to decline the award. He explained that when the news broke that he was to receive the award, it “created a firestorm in the Catholic community, involving both the clergy and the laity.” He stressed that by declining the award “you will help ameliorate Catholic discord,” and that “by putting the interests of the Catholic community above your own interests, it will only redound to your benefit.”

When it appeared that Durbin was not giving in, we asked our supporters to petition him to do so. On September 29, we listed the email of his chief of staff in a news release, asking our subscribers to pound away. They did. One day later, Durbin yielded. We commended Sen. Durbin for doing the right thing.

In Donohue’s letter to Durbin, he said that “the proximate

cause of the backlash is your voting record on abortion," but he hastened to add, "Your support for same-sex marriage, and your probing of the religious convictions of Catholic nominees for the federal bench, have also elicited much criticism."

Regarding the latter issue, on September 23, prior to posting Donohue's open letter to Durbin, he detailed the senator's longstanding assaults on Catholics seeking a seat on the federal bench.

His opposition to Circuit Court nominee William Pryor (2003), Supreme Court nominee John Roberts (2005), and Circuit Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett (2017), were all unseemly. He probed them on their Catholic convictions, effectively promoting a religious test. Unlike other lay Catholic groups, we protested what Durbin did in each of these cases when they occurred.

The media made it sound as if it was just Durbin's pro-abortion stance that was a problem, which was not true.

We are delighted with this victory. Thanks to our base for contacting Durbin—they made it happen!