

Elder's Exit Applauded

The Catholic League is delighted to see that one of the most outspoken anti-Catholic bigots in the Clinton administration has been axed. Joycelyn Elders was nominated to the office of Surgeon General by President Clinton in 1993 and confirmed later by the Senate. The Catholic League opposed her nomination and confirmation from the beginning. Her anti-Catholic statements, numerous and clearly documented should have alone disqualified her from a position of national influence and authority. In addition to these remarks, however, she followed an extremist position on such delicate issues as sex education and abortion. In fact, it was the comment implying that perhaps masturbation should be taught as a healthy AIDS preventive that finally convinced Clinton officials that she was more of a liability than an asset.

The news release from the September 2, 1993 conference (held in opposition to her confirmation) was composed by William Donohue and signed by numerous other organizations, including the Southern Baptist Convention, Catholic War Veterans, Eagle Forum and the American Family Association. It outlined her history of public anti-Catholicism and her casual disregard for mainstream attitudes towards sex education. While the confirmation took place in spite of these efforts her offensive statements and radical positions were brought further into the public forum than ever before.

The Catholic League continued to speak out against her during her tenure as Surgeon General. Most recently, we sent her a letter in connection to our D.C. bus advertisement campaign. In the letter, we asked her to place warning labels on condoms, so that those who use them would know that there is a good chance that HIV infection will occur during sexual intercourse even if they do use a latex condom. Her office responded the day they received the letter, calling us to ask for the data which we used in making our statement that one in

three condoms fail in preventing the transmission of the AIDS virus. We sent the information which included the results of several studies published in reputable journals. We did not hear from her office after that. The next news concerning Dr. Elders was that she had been forced to resign from her position as Surgeon General due to pressure from the White House.

William Donohue was interviewed by the Catholic News Service on her resignation. He expressed the hope that the next person appointed to this important office will be more sympathetic with the attitudes and morals of mainstream America and free of anti-Catholic prejudice.