

FACTCHECK.ORG SKEWS HATE CRIMES BILL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue examines the contention of Factcheck.org that the Congressional hate crimes bill does not jeopardize religious speech and does not include pedophilia as a protected class:

In 2007, when the hate crimes bill was being considered, Rep. Louis Gohmert asked Rep. Art Davis whether a minister who preached against sexual relations outside marriage could be held liable for the violent actions of someone who attributed his behavior to the clergyman, Davis did not deny that this could happen. This is what gave rise to the concerns of religious conservatives, something never mentioned by *Factcheck.org*. Moreover, while there is language in the Senate version of the bill that does afford the kind of constitutional protections that religious conservatives have asked for, it is not certain whether these caveats will be included in the final version.

Factcheck.org is correct to say that the “plain meaning” of the term sexual orientation does not include pedophilia, but it is disingenuous to imply that the fears of religious conservatives are therefore without merit. When this subject came up in April in the House Judiciary Committee, an amendment to the hate crimes bill that would have excluded pedophilia from the definition of sexual orientation was defeated by the Democrats along party lines. So why would the Democrats insist on protecting child molesters, treating them as indistinguishable from homosexuals? *Factcheck.org* does not address this issue.

In other words, *Factcheck.org* has skewed the discussion, the effect of which is to make light of the concerns of religious conservatives. Those concerns are rooted in experience and are

not the product of conjecture, something a check of the facts easily confirms.