

FAITH-BASED CARE ACT DESERVES TO BE PASSED

The U.S. Senate will soon decide whether to pass the Charity Aid, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act. Co-sponsored by Senator Joseph Lieberman and Senator Rick Santorum, the bill is part of the faith-based initiative that President Bush has been supporting. It would provide incentives to charitable giving and allow some direct aid to social services. When the bill came to the Senate floor on November 14, 2002, it died: those opposed to the bill demanded several new amendments and thus ran out the clock.

Catholic League president William Donohue voiced his approval of the bill today:

“Senator Santorum is absolutely right to say that the CARE Act adds nothing new to the 1996 law on charitable choice that the Clinton administration supported. That is one reason why it should get clear sailing in the Senate; the other being that it helps the dispossessed.

“Catholic Charities and their analogues in other religions have been doing exemplary work for many years addressing the plight of the needy. That their impulse for doing so is grounded in their religious convictions should be a cause of celebration, not condemnation. Yet there are some who would rather deny counseling to the victims of domestic violence and treatment to those suffering from AIDS before they would ever allow a religious agency to provide the services. Perversely, some of these same persons champion the rights of women and homosexuals.

“The time has come to pass the CARE Act. It is most important that the public know which presidential hopefuls for 2004 side with the 1600 charitable organizations that advocate this

legislation. Thus far, we only know the positions of President Bush and Senator Lieberman. We look forward to seeing what the others think, especially those who love to espouse their support for the poor, the disabled, the abused, the handicapped, the homeless and the dying. Those who oppose this legislation should be seen for what they are—religiously challenged.”