

House Effort To Snub Cardinal Fails

A congressional committee tried to snub a prominent U.S. cardinal. The Catholic League acted, and the committee backed down. That we achieved a victory shouldn't surprise anyone—we've achieved lots of them. But the fact that it happened in a matter of mere hours was truly noteworthy. Here's what happened:

On July 19, the *New York Post* reported that a nonbinding resolution commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Archdiocese of New York had run into trouble in the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee. Aides to Rep. Henry Waxman of California, who chairs the committee, reportedly told Rep. Vito Fossella of New York, who introduced the resolution in May, that New York Archbishop Cardinal Edward M. Egan's name must be removed from the resolution if it was to be passed.

In a July 19 news release, Bill Donohue said:

"This is a defining moment for those who claim to be 'religion friendly': they can put up or shut up. The last thing any sitting congressman needs to do is to get into a fight with Catholics over this issue.

"It smacks of hubris for any public official to micromanage a resolution honoring the Archdiocese of New York. Moreover, it is only right that Cardinal Egan be mentioned in this resolution, and it is outrageous to even suggest that his name be deleted. If there is some congressman who wants to debate this issue with me, he or she should step forward now: I'll arrange for a debate on TV. Otherwise, we look forward to a speedy unanimous vote on this resolution as it was written."

Just a few short hours after Donohue's comments were re-leased

to the media, the Catholic League learned that the Government Reform and Oversight Committee had passed the resolution as it was initially introduced by Rep. Fossella; committee chairman Waxman called Fossella to tell him the news. As a result, there was no showdown with those who wanted to manipulate Fossella's splendid resolution.

We then contacted the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to make sure that passage of this fine statement honoring the New York Archdiocese proceeded without delay or revision. On July 25, the House voted 423-0 to pass the resolution—with Cardinal Egan's name still included.