

# JUDGE RULES AGAINST NATIVITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

U.S. District Court Judge Charles Sifton ruled against the plaintiffs today in the discrimination suit against the New York City Department of Education's policy regarding "Holiday Displays": the policy allows the Jewish menorah and Islamic star and crescent while banning the Christian symbol, the nativity scene. The Catholic League arranged for the Thomas More Law Center to file the suit in December 2002 on behalf of a Queens mother and her two children.

Sifton ruled that the policy is not unconstitutional and does not discriminate against Christians. In his decision he wrote that the policy is secular in intent—the menorah and star and crescent have a secular dimension while the nativity scene is "purely religious." Elsewhere he writes that the holiday displays "must be reviewed as perceived by the children, Christian children in particular, but not one hyper-sensitive Catholic child." The Thomas More Center will appeal this decision.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

"The Jewish menorah represents a miracle. When last we checked, miracles were considered religious. To say that it is a secular symbol is insulting to religious Jews. And to continue to say that other religions are allowed their religious symbols for display in schools, while Christians are not, promotes one religion over another.

"For the judge to say that the displays should not be viewed through the eyes of "one hyper-sensitive Catholic child" smacks of an incredible insensitivity not only to the child but to all Christians. Does the judge have an emotional

barometer to measure sensitivity? This has nothing to do with constitutional law.

“If the situation were reversed and the schools allowed a nativity scene and a dreidel—but not a menorah—would Judge Sifton call those Jews who would rightly protest this ‘hyper-sensitive’? If anyone is ‘hyper-sensitive’ it is the multi-cultural censors and diversity police who are offended by the mere sight of the Baby Jesus.”