

KANSAS WEIGHS BILL TO TAX CHURCHES

A bill in the Kansas House of Representatives that was initially introduced to repeal the sales tax exemption of all non-profit organizations was recently amended to target only religious non-profits. The bill, which was debated in March, sought to penalize the Catholic Church and organizations like Catholic Charities, as well as other religions and charitable groups. As we went to press, this legislation was yet to be debated.

This is the type of stunt that would be expected in states like New York, Illinois or California, not Kansas. Surely the sponsors know that in the unlikely event they succeed, the courts will strike the legislation. Not only do houses of worship and their charitable ancillary groups fulfill the express purpose of granting a tax-exempt status in the first place—servicing the common good—they cannot be singled out among non-profits in such a discriminatory manner. If it were libraries, hospitals, foundations or colleges and universities that were subject to having their tax-exempt status pulled, it would be met with great resistance. One could bet that Catholics, as well as Protestants, Jews and others, would register their outrage.

We know that due to incompetence and cowardice, Republicans and Democrats at all levels of government have created a fiscal nightmare for the American people. To think they can resolve this issue by punishing the faithful is as irresponsible as it is delusional.

We asked our members to contact Kansas House Speaker Mike O'Neal—who is opposed to the bill—to let him know that this legislation must be stopped.