

LEAGUE'S AMICUS IN VOUCHER CASE IS VICTORIOUS

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed the decision made today by the U.S. Supreme Court allowing school vouchers:

"This is a victory for the poor that triumphed over the so-called champions of the poor. Condemned to failing public schools in Cleveland, the poor have long opted for the same equal opportunity afforded the wealthy. Now they have it. What a victory for diversity!

"It is worth remembering that in the mid-1990s, a federal court ordered the state of Ohio to take over the atrocious public schools in Cleveland. The court even went so far as to declare the schools an 'emergency condition.' That is what triggered the voucher program giving the poor school choice.

"The Catholic League's amicus brief in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* argued that previous court characterizations of Catholic schools as being 'pervasively sectarian' were based on prejudice. Any reasonable student of these decisions would have to agree. Yet the four dissenting judges, led by Justice David Souter, seem not to get it. Souter wrote that 'There is, in any case, no way to interpret the 96.6 percent of current voucher money going to religious schools as reflecting a free and genuine choice by the families that apply to voucher.' He has it backwards: there is no free and genuine choice by families in choosing the right school for their children if they are locked into the public-school monopoly. The fact that most parents opt for sending their kids to Catholic schools (the money goes to them, not to the schools) is a tribute to parochial schools and a damning indictment of public schools.

“In a nation where some judges think it is constitutional to burn the American flag on public school property, but it is unconstitutional to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, this decision comes at the right time. We hope that those atheists who are at war with our religious heritage will also avail themselves of vouchers and enroll their kids in private schools run by non-believers. The sooner we empty the public schools of these people, the better.”