

# MARYLAND JUDGE VIOLATES CHURCH-STATE BOUNDARIES

Frederick County Circuit Judge Mary Ann Stepler has issued a preliminary injunction ordering a Catholic high school to allow two of its students, who have been expelled, to attend school pending a trial. The students, a boy and a girl, were expelled after a sexual encounter in the hallway of the school; they are suing on grounds of racial discrimination. Robert Forrest, president of the league's Baltimore chapter, spoke publicly on this issue, including an hour-long interview on WABC radio in New York.

The Catholic League came to the defense of the school, issuing the following reasons in a news release for its intervention:

"For St. John's Literary and for the expelled students, what matters is that justice be done. What matters for the Catholic League is that justice does not come from the bench. Independent of the innocence or the guilt of the students is the right of Catholic schools to determine their own disciplinary measures without intrusion from the courts. When the judiciary engages in imperialism, as it clearly has in this case, then the entire structure of democratic governance is jeopardized.

"Those who clamor for separation of church and state should support the Catholic League's position. If they don't, then it suggests that their real First Amendment interest is in exploiting church-state issues for political purposes.

"We hope that the school will fight this to the end. What is at stake is nothing less than the autonomy of Catholic schools."

