

MEDIA ATTACK DEVOS' VISIT TO CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' visit to a Catholic school:

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos was in Pennsylvania yesterday, attending a roundtable on education freedom. But for LGBT activists and their media allies, it was an opportunity to attack the religious freedom of Catholic schools.

The roundtable, hosted by Pennsylvania House Speaker Mike Turzai, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference and the Diocese of Harrisburg, was held at Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School—a school that, according to CNN, “subscribes to an anti-trans student policy.” Other media piled on. “Betsy DeVos To Promote School That Bans Transgender Students And Staff,” wailed the Huffington Post. CBS and NBC both deplored the Secretary's visit to a “school with [an] anti-transgender policy.” Of course Raw Story chimed in, and even the Fox News local affiliate ran with the CNN story.

But their entire premise is false. Harrisburg Catholic is not an outlier school initiating an “anti-trans” policy. It is a Catholic school that adheres to the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. The policy in question is not a “school policy,” it is the policy of the Diocese of Harrisburg; and it is consistent with the universal teaching of the worldwide Catholic Church.

That policy, and Church teaching, holds that “efforts to chemically and/or surgically alter the given biology” of a male or female “is understood in Catholic moral terms as self-mutilation and therefore immoral. To attempt to make accommodations for such persons would be to cooperate in the

immoral action and impose an unacceptable burden on others in the school community.”

The policy points out that when parents enroll a child in the school, they agree not to “publically act in opposition to Catholic teaching”—which, of course, they would be doing by having their child undergo a sex change procedure. Thus, the child “would be ineligible to attend or remain in attendance in a Catholic school.”

This all seems reasonable, to reasonable people. A religious school ought to be free to adhere to the teachings of its Church.

If DeVos’ critics had any respect for diversity, they would embrace the autonomy of Catholic schools, and the integrity of their faithfulness to Catholic teaching. But instead, LGBT activists and their media mouthpieces demand that *all* schools, even faith-based schools, be in service to the radical LGBT agenda—the teachings of their faith be damned.

Massachusetts Congresswoman Katherine Clark lectured DeVos that “The Department of Education is responsible for ALL students.” Except, apparently, those whose parents choose to send them to Catholic schools whose moral teachings Clark objects to. Secretary DeVos is to be commended precisely for her inclusion of ALL students, and ALL schools, in her efforts to promote educational excellence.

The topic of yesterday’s roundtable—which you wouldn’t have known from the CNN story—involved Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf’s veto of a school choice bill that would have increased tax credits for private school and prekindergarten scholarships for low and middle income families. It had nothing to do with the media’s contrived “trans” controversy. But the venue and participants presented two of their favorite targets: the Catholic Church and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

That proved too much for them to resist.