

# MEDIA IGNORE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY BILL



Bill Donohue comments on media reaction to the First Amendment Defense Act that was introduced last week in Congress:

Given the fact that the media are eyeing a critical Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, it seems logical it would cover a bill that seeks to curb the reach of a decision that would be favorable to gay marriage. But they are showing no such interest. Regrettably, this includes the Catholic media—not a single story was run on this issue.

On June 17, Sen. Mike Lee and Rep. Raúl Labrador introduced the First Amendment Defense Act. Specifically, it would bar the federal government from discriminating against those persons and groups who object, on religious grounds, to same-sex marriage. It would apply to individuals and organizations in both the profit and non-profit sectors.

Importantly, the bill is vigorously supported by the U.S. bishops. Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone and Archbishop William Lori, who head the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage and the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, respectively, issued a strong statement on June 19. As they pointed out, the Act provides broad protections, covering such areas as federal contracts, grants, employment and tax-exempt status.

Already, left-wing activists with a history of attacking religious liberty are up in arms. But it is precisely because

of people like them that the Act is necessary. We know, for example, that when the U.S. Solicitor General was recently asked by a Supreme Court justice whether churches might lose their tax-exempt status if they oppose gay marriage, he said that it “certainly [is] going to be an issue.”

It is a sad day when congressional legislation is needed to protect the First Amendment guarantee of religious liberty. But the attacks are mounting and more laws are needed. The media blackout of this bill speaks volumes about its politics.