

MORE DISHONESTY OVER DIVERSITY

At bottom, diversity means allowing for differences. So when the New York State Assembly passed a bill that would require all employers to provide contraceptive health insurance coverage for its employees, Catholics wondered whether there would be enough diversity to go around that would allow for a religious conscience protection clause. To their dismay, they learned the answer was no.

Catholics got better news from the New York State Senate when it accepted such a clause. A compromise measure is now being sought.

William Donohue personally wrote to every member of the New York State Legislature arguing that Catholic health care facilities and health maintenance organizations should have the right to opt out of any mandated contraceptive and infertility coverage.

Donohue made the point that “just as it is wrong for a religious institution to strong-arm state agencies to bow to religious precepts, it is wrong for the state to coerce religious institutions to accept programs that effectively vitiate their *raison d’être*.”

The league was most upset with a remark by Sheldon Silver, the Assembly Speaker. He said that a religious conscience exemption would be “taking religious freedom a little too far.” Silver, we said, needs to explain to Roman Catholics “why he thinks their rights are being pushed too far.” After all, we reasoned, “whose freedoms was he thinking of?”

We await a decision by the legislature.