

# NEBRASKA BILL MODIFIED

What started out as a collision course between Nebraska State Senator Lowen Kruse and the Catholic League was avoided when the legislation in question was modified to allay the Catholic League's concerns.

In January, Senator Kruse introduced a bill to the state's unicameral legislature that sought to curb underage drinking. In addition to banning minors from consuming alcohol in their own homes, the bill extended to places of worship during religious rites.

In response to protests from religious leaders of various faiths, Kruse claimed that it was unlikely that authorities would enforce the ban on wine used in Communion services. We weren't convinced and demanded that the bill be changed at once. We pointed out that even under Prohibition there was a religious exemption for wine. On our website, we provided Nebraskans with the appropriate contact information and encouraged them to let their representatives know how they feel.

Senator Kruse, a Methodist minister, then announced a compromise—he would allow up to one-half ounce of alcohol in a religious ceremony. We rejected this offer, maintaining it was not the business of government to be measuring wine at Catholic Masses. Senator Kruse then agreed to debate Bill Donohue on the Catholic Channel's "Seize the Day" show on Sirius Satellite Radio.

The debate took place on February 2, but it wasn't much of a contest: Kruse yielded on all counts and modified his bill so as not to burden religious liberty. Donohue congratulated him for his reasonableness and wished him the best.