

NEBRASKA LAWMAKERS ASKED TO CENSURE STATE SEN. ERNIE CHAMBERS FOR BIGOTRY

The Catholic League is asking Nebraska lawmakers to censure one of its state senators, Ernie Chambers. On November 5, in a debate over budget cuts, Chambers went on a tirade over public monies spent on students who attend Catholic schools; scholarships are currently available to poor students who attend private schools, including two Catholic colleges.

Chambers' complaint, which occurred the day before Nebraska lawmakers decided to cut the program by 3 percent next year, was aimed at the "Catholic hierarchy." He accused four fellow lawmakers of an "unholy alliance" with the Catholic Church to protect the scholarship program. Chambers said the Catholic Church was a "political entity" that was guilty of such past "crimes" as allowing segregated schools and the persecution of Galileo. State Senator Mike Foley labeled Chambers' remarks as "vile, hate-filled and bigoted" and fellow colleague Nancy Thompson branded the same comments as "anti-Catholic."

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league's position today:

"We are asking the Nebraska legislature to censure State Senator Ernie Chambers. The man is a bigot and thus deserves to be reprimanded. Preferably, Chambers should resign.

"As we've seen many times before, the issue of Catholic schools acquiring public support typically results in outbursts of Catholic bashing. It is bad enough when private citizens engage in such bigotry, but it is inexcusable when their representatives do.

"Since the horrors of 9-11, President Bush has rightly asked

all Americans to reject hatred toward any group. It is only fitting, then, that Nebraska lawmakers take this opportunity to censure State Senator Ernie Chambers for mocking the letter and the spirit of this call for tolerance.”