

NEW YORK POLITICIANS SNUB CATHOLICS

New York gubernatorial hopefuls Andrew Cuomo and Carl McCall have announced they will not be marching in New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade, saying they would only participate when members of a gay group are allowed to march under their own banner. Meanwhile, Senator Charles Schumer, who has skipped the parade since the flap with the gay group began, refuses to say whether he will march.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to the politicians' decision today:

"Andrew Cuomo and Carl McCall cite a lack of 'inclusiveness' in deciding to skip the parade. Apparently, their desire for inclusiveness does not extend to Irish Catholics in New York. Besides, their excuse is phony. Any gay or lesbian is welcome to march in the parade. But just as no right-to-life group is allowed to march under their own banner, neither can the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO). New York City Council Speaker Gifford Miller is also invoking the bogus 'inclusiveness' excuse. Cuomo may be the biggest loser of them all. He claims to be Catholic, wants the Catholic vote, yet turns on his own when it comes time to take a stand.

"The Catholic League spent three weeks calling Senator Schumer's office, trying in vain to find out if he would participate. For him to stay home is rank hypocrisy. Schumer has skipped the St. Patrick's Day parade since the ILGO controversy began more than ten years ago. Yet he had no problem marching in the 'Salute to Israel' when organizers of that event had a similar ban on gay groups marching under their own banner prior to 1999. Why does he respect the house rules of the 'Salute to Israel' parade but not the 'St. Patrick's Day' parade?

"Come election time, New York Catholics and indeed all New Yorkers will take note of these politicians' intolerance of Catholic beliefs in the organizing of the St. Patrick's Day parade."