

NEW YORK TIMES PRINTS BOGUS OP-ED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue speaks to an op-ed article in today's *New York Times* by Harvard law professor Lawrence Lessig:

Lessig says the Catholic Church failed to protect children "for hundreds of years," yet offers no evidence to support this outrageous claim. Most of the abuse, which involved post-pubescent males (not kids), occurred between the mid-60s and the mid-80s. Moreover, for him to say that the problem is "worsening" because the Church is allegedly taking a leading role preventing victims from compensation is complete and utter nonsense: all the data show that in recent years the Catholic Church has done a better job addressing this problem than any other institution. As for compensation, no organization has been more forthcoming in settling claims.

Lessig has the gall to say that the Catholic Church is standing in the way of repealing sovereign immunity: anyone who is even vaguely familiar with this subject knows it is the public school establishment—not the Church—that benefits from, and resists changes to, this discriminatory state doctrine. He really falls on his face when he hails New York Assemblywoman Margaret Markey: she is the one seeking to insulate the public schools from being treated the same way in law that private [read: Catholic] schools are with regards to the statute of limitations. In other words, Lessig is siding with those who want to *keep* sovereign immunity. He's in good company: on March 23, 2009, the *New York Times* decided not to back the bill by Assemblyman Vito Lopez that would have treated private and public institutions equally. Instead, it backed the Markey bill that shielded the public schools under the cover of sovereign immunity.

When I submit letters or op-ed page ads to the *Times*, they typically request that I offer proof of my assertions. I have no problem with that. But I do have a problem when op-ed page submissions strewn with factual errors are accepted without emendation.

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