

# NEW YORKERS KEPT IGNORANT OF ABORTION LAW

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a poll that says New York Catholics support the new abortion law:

The media, and now even a polling company, are to blame for keeping New Yorkers ignorant about the new abortion law signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Consider the following.

In the January 30 edition of the *New York Post*, there is a news story on the New York State abortion law. "In the most recent Siena survey," it says, "59 percent of Catholics backed Albany's push for an updated abortion law, while only 30 percent were opposed."

When I read that sentence, I knew it was inaccurate. Non-Catholics, never mind Catholics, would not support the law *if they had an accurate understanding of what it says*. They do not, thanks to the media. Siena College Research Institute is also to blame.

Regarding the media, virtually every news story on this issue reported that Cuomo's law simply codifies *Roe v. Wade*. Many New Yorkers, like other Americans, have become accustomed to the 1973 decision, so the alarms don't go off when they learn of a new law which makes that ruling concrete. But that summary is dishonest.

Here are three aspects of the law that the media skirted: a) the right to terminate a pregnancy through term; the right to allow babies born alive as a result of a botched abortion to die unattended by staff; and the right of non-physicians to perform abortions.

Some stories said abortions would be allowed beyond 20 weeks, but they never said that would include partial-birth abortions

where the child is 80 percent born. Allowing for infanticide was never mentioned. And the public was never told that the non-physicians can perform abortions.

Cardinal Dolan said it well when he said the law “drops all charges against an abortionist who allows an aborted baby, who somehow survives the scissors, scalpel, saline and dismemberment, to die before his eyes.” New Yorkers were never told that.

The Siena poll which says Catholic New Yorkers approve the law by a margin of 59 percent to 30 percent is badly flawed. It did not address any of the three aspects of the law that I noted. It simply probed whether respondents agreed if “New York’s law on abortion [should be made] consistent with the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade.” That is not what Cuomo’s law is all about.

What if respondents were told the truth? They were in 2013 when Cuomo tried to get his law passed then.

A poll of New Yorkers by the Chiaroscuro Foundation found that 75 percent opposed the provision allowing non-physicians to perform abortions and that 80 percent opposed allowing unlimited abortion through all nine months of pregnancy. They were not asked about allowing a baby who survives an abortion to die unattended. Also, the poll did not disaggregate on the basis of religion, so we don’t know what Catholics might have said, never mind what practicing Catholics might have said.

No one can be expected to come to a reasonable conclusion about any issue unless he is accurately informed about its contents. New Yorkers were not informed by the media, and the Siena poll did not tap into the truth of the matter.