

NEWS BRIEFS

Weld at it again

The Catholic League has condemned the decision of the Weld Administration to divert a portion of cigarette tax revenues in Massachusetts to fund homosexual programs in public schools. Catholic League Executive Director C. J. Doyle called Governor Weld's decision "an insult to taxpayers" and stated "The people of Massachusetts did not vote to fund the homosexual agenda when they voted to raise the cigarette tax last November. This outrageous misappropriation of public funds not only deceives the taxpayers, who were told the money would pay for anti-smoking programs, but violates their religious freedom rights, by forcing them to subsidize programs that will affirm the homosexual lifestyle."

Hollywood bashes Catholics

Michael Medved, an outspoken and well regarded critic of Hollywood, in an interview with the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, says that the Catholic Church has been "singled out as a target" by producers in Hollywood. However, Medved said that Hollywood's attitude toward religious values was not the result of a conspiracy, but came about because people who work in the entertainment industry are so far removed from any religious influence.

RFRA advances

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was drafted in response to the Supreme Court's 1990 decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*, was approved by the House in May, but now faces difficulties in the Senate. The RFRA, backed by a broad coalition including the U.S. Catholic Conference, seeks to restore and codify the "compelling interest" test for all groups, which the court abandoned in *Smith*. Trouble for passage of the bill looms in the Senate where there are

concerns that prison inmates could use the bill to claim special privileges. Some Senators wish to amend the bill to give prisons a special exemption. A Senate vote on the bill has not yet been scheduled.