

NYU LAW DEAN RESPONDS TO DONOHUE: REQUESTED EVIDENCE ABSENT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an e-mail he received from New York University Law Dean Richard Revesz about the controversy surrounding Singaporean law professor Thio Li-ann:

It is my position that an organized campaign of intimidation forced Professor Thio to reconsider her willingness to teach a course this fall at NYU. It is also my position that Dean Revesz failed to use this controversy to educate the NYU community: faculty who reject, as Professor Thio does, the proposition that it should be legal for two men to marry is a respectable—indeed mainstream—opinion (in the 30 states that have put the issue of gay marriage on the ballot, the voters have rejected it 30 times). Therefore, efforts to pressure Professor Thio into reconsidering her appointment are not only deplorable, they represent a political attack on academic freedom, as well as her right to free speech.

Dean Revesz disagrees. In his letter to me, he said, “I welcome differing viewpoints and appreciate hearing from you.” But my letter did more than just register a disagreement—I challenged Revesz to identify a single sentence written by Thio in response to her critics that was, in his words, “offensive and hurtful.” The best he could do was to say that “comments were made [by Thio] that were viewed as offensive by those with opposing viewpoints.” This is pretty lame stuff.

It should be plain for everyone to see that Dean Revesz’s refusal to take up my challenge and point to a single sentence written by Thio that crossed the line speaks volumes. Quite frankly, Professor Thio was hounded out of NYU for political

reasons. The fact that Revesz cannot provide evidence to support his position effectively vindicates Thio.

Contact Revesz at richard.revesz@nyu.edu