

OBAMA REJECTS RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION



Bill Donohue comments on President Obama's latest assault on religious liberty:

For 20 years, Congress failed to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), suggesting that the legislation must be burdened with more than just a few controversial features. President Clinton and President Bush respected the right of the legislature not to pass the bill, but President Obama is different: he said he signed it because the bill had stalled in the Congress. Why we need the Congress at all he did not explain.

The president not only issued an Executive Order imposing ENDA, he chose to sign that version of the bill which fails to grant a religious exemption; all he did was to preserve the limited religious exemption that was coined by the Bush administration. He explicitly rejected several proposals that would have insulated religious institutions from state overreach. This is critical because of what is at stake: ENDA applies to "sex, sexual orientation [and] gender identity"; as we have learned, this includes behavior, not simply status.

Earlier versions of this bill said that "This Act shall not apply to a religious organization," but in 2007 this exemption was made conditional. Obama, who has no aversion to

exemptions—over 100 million are exempt from his signature ObamaCare legislation—cannot bring himself to exempt religious institutions whenever the issue touches on homosexuality. Which is why the bishops oppose ENDA.

Most reasonable persons distinguish between sexual orientation and sexual behavior, but not this gay-friendly, religion-unfriendly, administration. What does this mean? Look for cross-dressers and other lovely types to spring forward demanding their rights. Look for homosexuals to sue Catholic institutions that do business with the federal government insisting on pension benefits for their “spouse.”

The heart of the problem is (a) the mad idea that sexuality is a social construction, when, in fact, it is rooted in nature, and (b) an unyielding hostility to religious liberty.