

# OBAMA 'S PUBLIC POLICY BLUNDERS

Over the past few months, Democratic presidential candidate, Sen. Barack Obama has displayed his inability to win over Catholic voters. This was evident when he formed his Catholic National Advisory Council and appointed pro-abortion Catholics to its Leadership Committee. Recently, Sen. Obama has disappointed Catholics again. This time regarding his public policies on school vouchers, faith-based initiatives and selective infanticide.

When Obama was a state senator in Illinois in June 2002, he was explicitly asked by Chicago media personality Jeff Berkowitz whether or not he supports school vouchers. Obama answered, "I would support anything that is going to be better off for the children of Illinois." Obama added emphatically that he was not "close minded" on the issue of school vouchers and school choice.

Fast-forward to February 2008 when Obama spoke to reporters from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* about the very same issue. Still keeping an open mind, he said, "If there was any argument for vouchers, it was 'Let's see if the experiment works.' And if it does, whatever my preconception, you do what's best for the kids."

However, on July 12, Obama changed his tune and told the American Federation of Teachers that he was opposed to vouchers. When his campaign was asked about his new position, it released a statement saying, "Senator Obama has always been a critic of vouchers."

Clearly the senator was pandering to the teachers' union. It was so easy only a few months before for Obama to tell the media that he has an open mind on vouchers, but when the money

called, Obama showed his true colors.

It is a shame that the Illinois senator will not place himself in the shoes of struggling American parents whose children are enrolled in depleted public schools; Obama and his wife are fortunate enough to send their two daughters to a private charter school in Illinois. With this change of heart, Obama placed himself on the list of American elites who would never dare to send their own children to a public school but work hard to deny the less fortunate the same options they are lucky to have.

On July 1, Obama again disappointed the religious community when he spoke about his faith-based initiative: because Obama wants to gut faith from these programs he should have scrapped the plan altogether.

The Illinois senator stated that faith-based groups that receive federal grants can't use that money "to proselytize to the people [they] help and [they] can't discriminate against them—or against the people [they] hire—on the basis of their religion." Obama went on to say, "Federal dollars that go directly to churches, temples and mosques can only be used on secular programs."

So, to get this straight, Obama believes that faith-based groups cannot act according to their faith, when using federal grant money. If this were to pass, an Orthodox Jewish day care center that receives federal money must not disseminate its values and is not allowed to exclusively hire Orthodox Jews. Also, Catholic foster care programs would not be able to place Catholic children with Catholic parents.

We blasted Obama for his attitude toward faith-based programs. Indeed, Obama said, "I'm not saying that faith-based groups are an alternative to government or secular nonprofits, and I'm not saying that they're somehow better at lifting people up." In our news release, we issued a rebuttal:

"The whole purpose behind funding faith-based programs is that they are, in fact, superior to secular programs. And the reason they are has everything to do with the inculcation of religious values disseminated by people of faith. No matter, Obama wants to gut the religious values and bar religious agencies from hiring people who share their religion. Hence, his initiative is a fraud."

In an early July interview with *Relevant* magazine, Obama admitted that when he was in the Illinois state senate he voted against a bill that would require health care for a baby who survived an abortion. "The reason was that there was already a law in place in Illinois that said that you always have to supply life-saving treatment to any infant under any circumstances, and this bill actually was designed to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, so I didn't think it was going to pass constitutional muster," Sen. Obama told the magazine.

When we heard that he was dodging the issue of his support for selective infanticide, we called him on his bluff.

We issued a news release stating that Obama's position that the bill he voted against would overturn *Roe* was not a gray area. The bill explicitly stated that it would not overturn the infamous case.

When Obama fielded the question on whether or not he supported selective infanticide—which we charge he did—the presidential candidate replied that it was not a "fair characterization." In our news release we asked if that was the best he could do. Given the seriousness of the accusation, if it were totally bogus, any other candidate for the presidency would immediately hold a press conference and demand an apology and a retraction. That Obama did not do so spoke volumes.

With his consistent blundering on the issues most sensitive to Roman Catholics, Obama risks losing their support. If Obama wishes to attract more Catholics to his campaign, he should

move in line with the issues near to their hearts.