

OHIO REPORTING BILL WILL RESPECT CONFESSIONAL

On June 5, Catholic League president William Donohue issued a news release detailing the league's objections to a pending bill in Ohio that would require the clergy to report instances of sexual abuse but did not explicitly protect the sanctity of the confessional. It was the bill submitted by Rep. Lance Mason that raised Donohue's eyebrows. A better bill, he said, was the one introduced by Sen. Robert Spada; it specifically protected the confessional seal.

A staff member from Rep. Mason's office called the Catholic League yesterday to clarify the legislator's intentions. Today, Rep. Mason himself called. Donohue was pleased and commented as follows:

"It is the position of Rep. Lance Mason that he never meant to change the traditional status of the priest-penitent privilege. He strikes us as sincere and thus puts to rest our concerns. Indeed, Rep. Mason went so far as to say that he 'would never do any harm' to what he labeled as one of the 'greatest institutions on earth.'

"We commend Rep. Mason for his quick and decisive statement of clarification. And we thank him for his kind words regarding the Catholic Church."