

OHIO VICTORY

When the Catholic League learned that bills were pending in Ohio that would require members of the clergy to report suspected cases of child abuse to the authorities, our concern was that the sanctity of the confessional not be compromised. At the end of the day there was nothing to worry about, but it didn't start that way.

The bill that was introduced by Sen. Robert Spada explicitly protected the seal of the confessional. But there was another bill, introduced by Rep. Lance Mason, that did not initially allow for the priest-penitent privilege. This led William Donohue to write every member of the Ohio House expressing his misgivings over any bill that would sacrifice the confidentiality of the confessional.

"All across the nation we have asked state legislators not to compromise the Catholic Sacrament of Reconciliation," Donohue told the press. He indicated that "we have been very pleased with the results overall." He emphasized that Ohio lawmakers should follow suit.

Donohue wrote to the lawmakers on the same day he issued the news release, June 5. On June 10, Rep. Mason called our office to say that he never meant to change the traditional status of the priest-penitent privilege. He even went so far as to say that he "would never do any harm" to what he called one of the "greatest institutions on earth."

We publicly commended Rep. Mason for his quick and decisive statement of clarification. We also thanked him for his kind words regarding the Church.