

# VANCE IS RIGHT ABOUT CHRISTIAN LOVE

J.D. Vance makes a commonsensical comment about a Christian notion of love and immediately he is subjected to condemnation. Here is what he said that has “progressives” so upset.

“There’s this old school and I think it’s a very Christian concept, by the way—that you love your family and then you love your neighbor and then you love your community and then you love your fellow citizens and your own country, and then after that you can focus and prioritize the rest of the world.”

He also said, “A lot of the far left has completely inverted that. They seem to hate the citizens of their own country and care more about people outside their own borders. That is no way to run a society.”

As we shall see, Vance was right about what he said about Christian love. Regarding his quip about the far left hating America, it does not need to be defended—it is axiomatic. Indeed, it is one of their most defining characteristics.

Father James Martin was one of Vance’s more prominent critics. He said Vance’s comment about love “misses the point of Jesus’ Parable of the Good Samaritan.” But it is Martin who has missed Vance’s point: he never mentioned Jesus or the Good Samaritan. As he made clear when asked about his critics, Vance defended himself by referencing *ordo amoris*, or ordered love.

Vance was not taking issue with the biblical injunction to “love thy neighbor as thy self.” This obligation is found in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18), as well as in the New Testament (Mark 12: 28-34). He understands that our “neighbor”

means everyone. He is simply offering a practical understanding of the locus of love: it should begin with our family, and then extend outwards.

The idea of “ordered love” is indeed a Christian conception of love. It was given to us by Saint Augustine. “*Virtus est ordo amoris*,” he wrote, which means virtue is the order of love, or love set in proper order. Vance is also right to say that this is an “old school” observation. In the First Letter to Timothy (5:8), it is written that “whoever does not provide for relatives and especially family members has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Vance said that “the idea that there isn’t a hierarchy of obligations violates basic common sense. Does [anyone] really think his moral duties to his own children are the same as his duties to a stranger who lives thousands of miles away? Does anyone?”

Practically speaking, we are limited in the number of people we can be friends with, never mind love.

Anthropologist Robin Dunbar has done the most extensive work on this subject; his research includes hunting and gathering societies. He found that humans are capable of having 15 good friends, 50 friends, 150 meaningful contacts, 500 acquaintances and 1500 people that we can recognize. Therefore, loving thy neighbor is a tall order, one most likely to be achieved by loving our family members, and then embracing those outside our family unit.

Vance’s remark about the “far left” caring more about people they don’t know than their fellow Americans is incontestable. The champions of humanitarianism as identified by the “far left” are Rousseau and Marx.

Rousseau had five illegitimate children, refused to even give them a name, never mind support them. Marx impregnated his maid and made his colleague, Engels, assume paternity of his

son, Freddy. But both of them proclaimed great love for mankind.

Rousseau and Marx set the table for left-wing Americans: they are the least generous persons in the nation, as measured by charitable giving and volunteering. The most generous are practicing people of faith. It's not hard to figure out. The former believe it is the job of government to help the poor, not individuals. Religious Americans see it as their job.

Mother Teresa understood what Vance was saying; she also knew that people like Rousseau, Marx and their ilk were phonies. "It is easy to love those who live far away," she said. "It is not always easy to love those who live right next to us."

It may be that the reaction against Vance has less to do with what he said than it does with who he is: he is a young convert to Catholicism, a conservative, and Vice President of the United States. Ergo, Christians on the left have their antennas in the stratosphere looking for anything he says that they can pounce on. They are off to a lousy start.

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## **THE POLITICS OF THE "NAZI SALUTE"**

At an Inaugural rally on January 20, Elon Musk raised his hand in a celebratory moment to salute the crowd. He was instantly accused of making the "Nazi salute." Now he has been outdone by what happened to Calvin John Robinson. He has been fired for making the same gesture.

Who is this man? Until yesterday the 39-year-old black man was a priest in the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) in the UK. But

he had his license revoked and is no longer a member of the ACC. His crime? On January 25, he waved to the crowd at the National Pro-Life Summit in Washington, D.C. But his bosses weren't convinced he was waving. They said that "many have interpreted [it] as a pro-Nazi salute."

The ACC did not say who these people are who can identify a fascist by the way he waves his hand. Nor did they provide an estimate of how many believed he was making a Nazi salute. Maybe if they took the time to ask the pro-life crowd what they thought, they might have learned that his hand waving was seen as nothing more than a friendly gesture.

The ACC's official statement on this incident is revealing. "While we cannot say what was in Mr. Robinson's heart when he did this, his action appears to have been an attempt to curry favor with certain elements of the American political right by provoking opposition."

This is simply dishonest. They could have learned what was in his heart—all they had to do was talk to him. But they chose not to. So they speculated, attributing to him the most scurrilous interpretation.

Let's face it. Father Robinson's crime was being heralded by a crowd of American conservatives. That's why they gave him the boot.

Robinson is a self-described Evangelical Catholic who is proud to be a conservative. He is not only pro-life, he opposes gay marriage, the ordination of women, critical race theory and Black Lives Matter. In left-wing circles, that's enough to label him a fascist. No hand waving is needed.

What is the difference between a friendly hand-waving gesture and a "Nazi salute"?

Why are Musk and Robinson giving the "Nazi salute" in pictures of them waving to crowds but pictures showing Barack,

Elizabeth Warren, Hillary and Kamala waving to crowds are not? Snopes, the left-wing “fact checkers,” has an answer. On January 25, they titled their article, “No, These Politicians Did Not Make the Same Gesture as Elon Musk.”

Snopes is careful not to say that Musk was definitely giving the “Nazi salute,” but it implies that he was. By contrast, it is cock-sure that the four American liberals are innocent.

Speaking of the latter, Snopes says those “images were taken out of context from speeches in which each politician was making an unrelated gesture, including waving or raising their [sic] hand to make a point. Their language, demeanor and the wider context of the video shows the gestures cannot be interpreted as Nazi salutes.”

Why is Musk not accorded the same assessment? Weren't photos of his hand taken out of context? Why were the four liberals waving to the crowd but he wasn't? What language did he use that was Nazi-like? What was Nazi-like about his demeanor? For that matter, what exactly does Nazi “demeanor” look like?

Those who don't like Obama, Warren, Hillary and Kamala invariably refrain from calling them Nazis. But many of those who don't like Musk can't resist branding him a Nazi. And now there is a new “Nazi” on the block, Calvin John Robinson.

It's one thing to disagree with your adversaries; it's quite another to demonize them.

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## **HEGSETH'S CHRISTIAN TATTOO IS**

# MERITORIOUS

At the confirmation hearing for Pete Hegseth, who was chosen by President Donald Trump to be Secretary of Defense, he was badgered by some Democrats for his Christian chest tattoo. In doing so, they followed the lead of the far-left Daily Beast which started this faux controversy in November.

At issue is the Jerusalem Cross. From the perspective of the uninformed, as well as bigots, the Jerusalem Cross is an extremist symbol. Some of them no doubt are offended by the sight of crèches at Christmastime.

Hegseth correctly said that “It is a Christian symbol.” He aptly noted that on the front page of the program commemorating the death of President Jimmy Carter was the same Jerusalem Cross. Would that make Carter and the Democrats “extremist”? Someone should ask Senator Elizabeth Warren—she is the one who is leading this unseemly charge.

Republican Senator Kevin Cramer cleverly picked up on this smear tactic, sarcastically asking Hegseth, “What is this very offensive, racist tattoo?”

This is a bad omen. Trump has only recently started and some Democrats are stooping so low as to play the anti-Christian card. They are shameless.

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## **ST. PAT'S NYC MILESTONE MARCH; TEN YEARS OF BETRAYAL**

March 17 marks the tenth anniversary of homosexuals marching

under their own banner in New York City's St. Patrick's Day Parade. When the decision was reached in September 2014 that gays could march in 2015, Bill Donohue pulled the Catholic League contingent from ever marching again. He did so because he was double-crossed—he was lied to by senior parade officials.

In late August 2014, Donohue was asked by John Fitzsimons, a lawyer and parade organizer, if he would object to including a gay group marching in 2015. Donohue, who was acting as the PR point man for the parade for 20 years, said it would be okay provided they made a formal change in the rules, and they included a pro-life group to march.

The latter was important because Donohue had been telling the media for decades that gays and pro-life people have always been free to march in the parade; they just could not do so under their own banner. He was assured that would happen. On September 3, 2014, Donohue issued a news release about this development.

On September 4, William O'Reilly, the parade's spokesman, said that only one gay group (affiliated with NBC) would march. A few hours later, John Lahey, president of Quinnipiac University and vice chairman of the parade, announced that other gay groups could also apply to march.

On September 9, Donohue issued a statement about three new gay groups applying to march. He took a shot at Lahey for opening the door and for implying that a pro-life group might not be included.

On September 11, Lahey made it official. When asked if a pro-life group would be allowed to march, he said, "That won't be happening." That same day, Donohue released a statement titled, "We Will Not March."

This ugly chapter started only two weeks after the 2014 parade.

On April 1, 2014, Lahey sent a letter to the directors of the parade citing pressure from the corporate and collegiate elite. Heineken, Guinness, Manhattan College, Fairfield University, the Irish government, and the Ford Motor Company were threatening to pull their role in underwriting the costs of televising the parade on NBC. The latter found an ally in Frances X. Comerford, parade organizer and chief revenue officer for NBC. Irish Central also played a role in pushing for gays to crash the parade.

We had the law on our side, and the people on our side. It was corrupt members of the ruling class that lied and sold us out.

To this day, the Catholic League is the only group to pull its contingent from marching.

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## **COMPASSION IS NOT NECESSARILY VIRTUOUS**

In our therapeutic world, where feelings too often dominate reason, it is almost sinful to question the merits of compassion. But to have real-life meaning, we need to know the object of compassion before applauding. In other words, when compassion is misplaced, it is not virtuous.

A popular dictionary definition of compassion reads, “sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.” It cites as an example, “the victims should be treated with compassion.”

This is accurate. We should show compassion for the “sufferings or misfortunes of others,” such as those who have lost their homes in southern California. We should also show

compassion to "victims," such as those who have been victimized by illegal aliens. [The initial phase of the deportation roundup is targeting criminals.]

The latter is now a matter of contention in some quarters. Many hold that those who are now being deported are victims deserving of compassion. Which begs the question: Why is it compassionate to deport those who have entered our country illegally and have victimized innocent Americans?

Not to distinguish between victimizers and victims is immoral. Surely it is immoral to show compassion for Nazis and not the Jews they baked in ovens. Surely it is immoral to show compassion for child abusers and not the children. So why is it compassionate to show compassion for illegal aliens who have committed violent crimes against Americans but not their victims?

The same people who turned a blind eye to the sufferings of women being raped by illegals are now apoplectic at the sight of the rapists being deported. This is a classic case of misplaced compassion.

Those who have entered our country illegally, but have not engaged in criminal behavior, may not be a threat to the well-being of Americans, but they are not innocent either.

No one likes line jumpers. Kids know this to be true, which is why they object when someone cuts in front of them while waiting in line at an amusement park. Adults complain when someone jumps the line at supermarkets. And those who are waiting in line in foreign countries to enter the United States legally have every right to express their indignation at those who are crashing our borders.

To show compassion for line jumpers but not those who are playing by the rules is immoral.

Context matters when making moral judgments, but too often it

does't. That's because we have allowed feelings to guide our moral compass. This is a serious mistake. Feelings should never be discounted, but they are not dispositive.

We need to employ the faculty of reason before cheering those making public displays of compassion. If we do, we may decide they are more deserving of our contempt.

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## **CBS ' DUPLICITOUS NEWS COVERAGE**

CBS, quite like the other broadcast networks, is not known for taking the side of the U.S. bishops. But now that Donald Trump is president, things are changing.

On the January 26 edition of the CBS show, "Face the Nation," Margaret Brennan grilled Vice President J.D. Vance for being oppositional to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Clearly taking the side of the bishops, she pressed Vance, who is Catholic, on why the Trump administration would disagree with the bishops on the issue of sending law enforcement into schools and churches to round up illegal aliens who have committed violent crimes. Vance stood his ground, arguing that the roundup is exactly what the public wants Trump to do.

[Note: The Immigration and Nationality Act prohibits anyone from knowingly harboring an undocumented immigrant "in any place, including any building."]

We have been following CBS for decades, and this stance is certainly "breaking news" to us. We can't remember when CBS

has been so supportive of the bishops on any issue. But we do have a file on its Catholic-bashing reporting over the years.

More important, there is no record of Brennan, or any CBS journalists, ever trying to pin the Biden administration's policies against the bishops, even though it was led by a "devout Catholic."

Five months into Biden's term, we issued a 12-page-report, "President Biden's Policies: Departures From Catholic Teachings." Our report of June 15, 2021, which listed one example after another, was sent to every bishop in the nation.

At the end of Biden's term, when Vice President Kamala Harris was selected to challenge Trump, we issued a 22-page-report, "Harris and Trump On Religious Liberty," comparing Trump's first term to the Biden-Harris years. Released on May 2, 2024, we found that much of the Biden administration's record was at odds with the policies of the bishops' conference, yet the media were wholly disinterested in reporting on this.

Among the issues that the Biden team differed with the bishops were abortion; transgender policies; school choice; neutering faith-based programs; the Department of Justice probe of Catholics; singling out pro-life Catholics for breaking the FACE Act; forcing Catholic doctors and hospitals to perform abortions and sex-reassignment surgery; and support for the Equality Act (which would gut religious liberty).

CBS showed no interest in doing a story on any of these policy differences.

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# TRYING TO NAIL NEW ORLEANS ARCHDIOCESE

In violation of a court order, someone leaked some 300 email exchanges between the New Orleans Saints and the Archdiocese of New Orleans that show how the football team provided public relations advice to the archdiocese on cases of priestly sexual abuse. The emails were given to the Associated Press, the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*; other media outlets now have them as well.

This is a story that is largely contrived. No charges of illegal behavior have been made by anyone against any party to this story. Moreover, it is hardly breaking news that elites in one sector of society offer advice to elites in another sector of society. So what gives?

Mark Florio of NBC Sports aptly notes that “it appears that the violation [of the court order] was conducted to create maximum embarrassment for the Saints. Strategically, it’s smart. The Saints are hosting the Super Bowl on Sunday. The Monday morning of Super Bowl week traditionally becomes a perfect spot to drop a nugget that will get attention, since it’s usually slow. Until, of course, the [NFL] Commissioner commences his annual Super Bowl press conference.”

Commissioner Roger Goodell has already downplayed this “story.”

It is well known in New Orleans that its owner, Gayle Benson, is a devout Catholic who is on good terms with New Orleans Archbishop Gregory Aymond. Indeed, it was Aymond who introduced Benson to her husband; he has since passed away. So it is to be expected that friends would do what friends do, and offer advice on how to handle a problem.

What prompted the email exchange was a news story in 2018

about a deacon and schoolteacher who had been accused of sexual abuse and was removed from ministry in 1988, yet was still involved at a New Orleans church. When Aymond found out he said he was “utterly surprised and embarrassed.” It was then that Greg Bensel offered to provide “crisis communications” to the archdiocese; he is the Saints senior vice president of communications. Subsequently, a 2020 lawsuit revealed that the football team offered public relations advice to the archdiocese.

Most of the accusations are about offenses that took place decades ago. We know from the most authoritative sources that the overwhelming number of cases took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, and that the offenders are either dead or have been kicked out of the priesthood. There are almost no cases of abuse taking place today, whether it be in New Orleans or anywhere else.

It should also be noted that the Associated Press is wrong to report that the offending priests were pedophiles. They were not. Over 8-in-10 were homosexuals, men who had sex with postpubescent males. Only 3.8 percent were pedophiles. The data from researchers at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice are conclusive.

The one outstanding question in this instance is whether some names of the accused that were released by the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 2018 were removed from the list. The New York Times says “it is not clear if names were actually removed from the list.” James Gulotta, a lawyer for the Saints, says no Saints employee was involved in creating the list.

The big media have no business feeling emboldened about this story. Their record of covering up sexual abuse crimes has been well detailed (see my book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*). Take the *New York Times*.

In 2017, when four female journalists accused *Times* reporter Glenn Thrush of sexual misconduct, there was no independent investigation; the probe was done in-house. Dean Baquet, the executive editor of the paper, decided his behavior did not deserve termination. Instead, Thrush was allowed to undergo counseling. He still writes for the *Times*.

Yet when the Catholic Church does not act with dispatch, the editorial board slams them.

The same year that accusations were made against Thrush, three women accused Michael Oreskes of sexual harassment. Two of the alleged incidents occurred in the 1990s, when Oreskes was the Washington, D.C. bureau chief. At the time, Jill Abramson, who would later become the executive editor for the *Times*, was deputy to Oreskes. She admitted that she knew of his alleged offenses but did nothing to stop them.

It should also be said that Protestant, Jewish and Muslim groups are not averse at seeking to access the PR services of blue chip firms. There is nothing wrong with any of this.

Wouldn't it be interesting if the mainstream media did a story on how deeply involved local and state public officials are in working with public school officials in handling cases of sexual abuse in the schools? It is well known that the teachers unions generously grease the Democrats.

So if the "story" on the Saints and the New Orleans archdiocese merited the front page in the *New York Times*, below the fold, a story of this kind surely deserves an above the fold spot, if not a spread.

We don't have to wait and see—it will never happen.

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# CORPORATIONS ASKED TO DROP DEI POLICIES

American culture is going through one of its periodic changes. One good change is the decision of corporations to drop their DEI policies. They are divisive and ineffective. Worse, they create a hostile environment for some workers, including Christians.

The Catholic League staff acquired the email addresses of the top officials in 552 companies listed by the Human Rights Campaign in its 2023-2024 "Corporate Equality Index" report; all have DEI policies. We wrote to all of them, asking the CEOs to follow the lead of some prominent corporations and abandon these policies. We cited research that proves what a disaster they are.

It is not enough for major changes to be made in the political arena. We need to make changes in the business community and in the culture as well.

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## THE DEATH OF DEI

DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) policies are dying. This became inevitable once the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action in college admissions in 2023. Subsequently, the corporate elite began to reconsider the wisdom of keeping their DEI policies. Pressure from advocacy groups, such as the Catholic League, added to the momentum. Most important, President Trump is currently busy putting the final nails in the coffin.

Killing DEI is not enough. We need to know why these policies were implemented in the first place, and why they failed.

DEI was born of cultural Marxism, white guilt and elite cowardice.

Cultural Marxists believe that progress is best achieved by identifying the oppressors and the oppressed, and then establishing policies that punish the former and reward the latter. White heterosexual male Christians are the oppressors. The oppressed are their mirror opposite. In real life, this means that poor white guys from the hills of West Virginia are the bad guys, and rich black lesbians from Hollywood are the good guys.

This may sound unfair, but not to cultural Marxists. They know they are right because they can chart their taxonomy on the blackboard and in the corporate board room.

White guilt plays a major role. Now it is not normal for anyone to be ashamed, or feel guilty, about the color of his skin. Such a pathology must be taught. In this case, those who indoctrinate their subjects with white guilt are mostly wealthy white liberal parents, teachers and activists. It makes them feel virtuous to assume a high moral mantle upon which they can lecture.

Elite cowardice is also important. The ruling class is easily intimidated by current fashions, so much so that they would rather not confront cultural bullies before standing fast. Hence, the creation of DEI offices. The potentates decided that at least it keeps the barbarians at bay.

DEI was dead on arrival for a much more significant reason: America is not a racist country.

Indeed, there is no nation on earth where men and women of all races, ethnicities, religions, classes and sexual persuasions are able to climb the social mobility ladder easier and more

quickly than in the USA. Migrants know this to be true—which is why they keep on coming—even if wealthy white liberals do not.

To see a real-life example of the almost total absence of racism, consider sports.

People of all races and ethnicities partake in collegiate and professional sports, and whenever a fight breaks out between opposing team players, the melee that ensues is purely along team lines, not racial lines. Black, white, Hispanic and Asian athletes rush to defend their teammates who get into a fight with the other team. We never see black guys from one team joining with black guys from the other team to beat up white players; the obverse is also true. Teams matter. Race does not.

Similarly, there is great camaraderie between team players of all races and ethnicities. Black and white players congratulate each other and support each other in a myriad of ways, both on and off the playing field. In many ways, they are a role model for those who want to envision what a post-racial, or color blind, society looks like.

Some years ago a friend of mine went to a Mets game and witnessed an unusual event.

Before the game began, a famous black player from the San Francisco Giants walked by two New York City policeman (one was white, the other black). The black cop asked the player to sign a mini baseball bat that he had. He did. Then the white cop asked him to do the same. He was told no. The black player explained that the black cop was his “brother.” The black cop quickly smashed the bat on the railing, breaking it in two. He pointed to his fellow officer and said to the player, “He’s my brother.”

Every decent person wants racial justice. But flawed policies that serve a noble cause are not virtuous, and when the

outcome actually exacerbates matters, they must be condemned. In short, when it comes to behavioral outcomes, results matter more than intent.

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## **ATTACKS ON THE CONFESSIONAL**

*On January 23, Bill Donohue wrote a letter to all Montana lawmakers protesting a bill that would vitiate the seal of the confessional. On January 29, the bill was tabled by the legislators. A more serious case then emerged in Washington. Below is an excerpt of Donohue's letter to the state's lawmakers.*

The issue of the sexual abuse of minors is a serious one, and efforts to combat it are meritorious. But good intentions are not enough. Public policy must also be judged on what it yields. If it does not correct the problem, and indeed creates new ones, then it is flawed. This is true of Senate Bill 5375 and House Bill 1211.

These bills would remove the clergy exemption from reporting information about child abuse learned in the confessional. Not only would they do nothing to curtail child abuse, they would eviscerate the priest-penitent privilege.

State encroachment on religious liberty is proscribed by the First Amendment. Accordingly, it must be weighed against the right of the state to protect children from abuse. Balancing these vital interests can be done. Indeed, it was done last year when a compromise was proposed: The priest-penitent privilege would remain, but if the priest learned that a child was in imminent danger, he had to contact the authorities. This bill passed in the Senate but languished in the House. Now the Senate is going along with the House version.

This begs a series of questions.

What broke? Where is the evidence that the compromised bill is inadequate? For that matter, where is the evidence that child molesters—in any state—report their crimes to priests in the confessional? We have been studying this issue for decades but we can't name a single instance where this has happened. If any lawmaker has evidence to the contrary, you have an obligation to make it public. If not, what exactly are you trying to do?

Similarly, does any lawmaker really think that if priests have to choose between violating their vows and abiding by the strictures in this bill, they would choose the latter? If so, they need a reality check. A priest who breaks the seal of confession would be excommunicated from the Catholic Church. They would rather go to jail before doing so.

State Sen. Noel Frame says she is sympathetic to religious lawmakers who have a hard time dealing with this issue, but she also knows that “far too many children have been victims of abuse—the Legislature has a duty to act.” She's right.

This begs another round of questions.

What exactly have Washington lawmakers done about child sexual abuse? As a sociologist who has written a book on this subject, I can tell you that the most likely persons to abuse a child are live-in boyfriends. Has anyone done anything about this? What about the sexual abuse of minors in the public schools? Now there is a rich subject.

In 2022, under the Biden administration, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights studied all 50 states and found that in 2017-2018, only three states had more sexual assaults per 1,000 students than Washington. When it comes to rape or attempted rape per 1,000 students, only six states had a worse record.

Last year the Seattle Public Schools agreed to pay \$16 million to a former student who said that the district failed to protect her from being sexually assaulted by two coaches. How could this possibly happen?

Now we have learned that House Democrats have introduced a new bill that would withhold notifying parents about the sexual assault of their child in school for up to 48 hours. In doing so, this bill directly overturns a parental rights bill that the voters previously approved. Worse, these same lawmakers have taken steps to permanently negate the will of the people. What's going on? There seems to be more interest in defending the rights of assailants than there is the welfare of the child or the rights of their parents.

Those who are lobbying to promote the House and Senate bills include the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF). The former is a shell of what it once was, having been shown by the courts to be a total fraud. The latter is one of the most anti-Catholic atheist organizations in the nation. So these are the kinds of people some lawmakers are listening to?

There is time to reconsider this bill. Please do so.