

PENTAGON GAG RULE CHALLENGED

Kevin Hasson, president of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, has sued the Secretary of Defense and the heads of the Air Force, Army and Navy over the Pentagon edict that barred Catholic chaplains from asking Catholic armed services personnel to send postcards to their representatives requesting that they override President Clinton's veto of the partial-birth abortion bill. Hasson is representing Air Force Reserve chaplain Rev. Vincent Rigdon and others.

The Pentagon issued its gag rule after Catholic chaplains began to implement the wishes of the National Catholic Conference of Bishops. Hasson put his case succinctly by stating, "For the first time in the history of the republic, the federal government has told priests, ministers, rabbis and imams, under threat of criminal prosecution, what they may and may not preach. This is an outrage that cannot go unchallenged."

The Catholic League joined the protest when the gag rule was implemented and is delighted that the Becket Fund is now pursuing this matter in the courts.