

PROBING ROBERTS ON RELIGION: THE GAME PLAN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on how some senators will probe John Roberts on religion at the hearings next week:

“The Catholic League has detailed the way critics of John Roberts have ripped him about his religion (click [here](#)). While the red flags noting his attendance at a ‘traditional’ Catholic church with his ‘pro-life’ wife continue to be flown, it is unlikely that Kennedy, Durbin, Leahy and Schumer will press Roberts too hard about his ‘personal’ views. Instead, they will try to paint him as an extremist. And in doing so, they will pick up on what advocacy groups are now saying.

“Americans United for Separation of Church and State, People for the American Way and the Alliance for Justice have all issued reports on Roberts; they have their talking points down well. None of these groups has ever had the slightest interest in defending religious liberty—their entire understanding of the First Amendment provision on religion is centered on talk about a mythical ‘wall’ separating church and state.

“Here’s the proof. In the Americans United 19-page report on Roberts, the terms ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’ nowhere appear (save for a reference to a work by James Madison on religious liberty), but the term ‘establishment clause’ is mentioned 28 times and the term ‘church and state’ appears 23 times. The report focuses on protecting the rights of ‘religious minorities’ from ‘majoritarian’ influences (meriting 11 and 7 citations, respectively). People for the American Way has a similar emphasis, ending its report on this issue by saying we need constitutional protections for ‘Americans of minority faiths.’ Not to be outdone, the

Alliance for Justice entitles its section on religion, 'Lowering the Wall Between Church and State.' In other words, we need to shield the 15 percent of Americans who are not Christian from 'those' Christians.

"Their goal is to paint Roberts a fanatic because he does not share their fanatical interpretation of the First Amendment. Nice try."