

“RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION SANCTITY ACT” DRAWS PRESS CONFERENCE ON JUNE 10

Press Alert

On Monday, June 10 at 1:30 p.m. at the New York Catholic Center (1011 First Avenue), Congressman Peter T. King of Long Island will discuss federal legislation that he has just introduced that protects all privileged, religious communications from governmental officials. The press conference, which is being organized by the Catholic League, comes on the heels of an Oregon D.A. who authorized the bugging of a priest in a confessional in the Lane County Jail. Support for the bill is widespread and cuts across all major religions; the participation of many of these supporters will be evident at the press conference.

The bill, H.R. 3571, known as the “Religious Communication Sanctity Act,” reads as follows:

“Whoever, under color of governmental authority, surreptitiously listens to or records in any manner, any communication that is privileged, because of its religious character, under Federal law or under the non-Federal law of the place where such communications takes place, shall be fined under this title [\$250,000] or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both.

“Any person aggrieved by a violation of this section consisting of the recording of a communication may, in a civil action, obtain the prompt destruction of that recording and any copies or transcripts made from that recording.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the bill today:

“After what happened in Eugene, Oregon, it is clear that this bill is a must. Congressman Peter King is doing a public service not only for Catholics, but for people of all faiths. If our First Amendment right to religious freedom means anything, it means that all privileged religious communications must be protected from the reach of the state. We expect broad support for this bill and a strong showing at the press conference.”