

# RELIGIOUS EQUALITY AMENDMENT BADLY NEEDED

At a press conference on July 10 at Hunter College, the Catholic League will join with various Christian and Jewish organizations in support of the Religious Equality Amendment. The amendment seeks to secure for all Americans their right to religious liberty and freedom of speech, both of which have been jeopardized in recent years by an overly aggressive interpretation of the so-called Establishment Clause.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, is expected to testify in Washington this September on the Religious Equality Amendment. He supports the testimony that Cardinal John O'Connor and Father Richard John Neuhaus will give on July 10 regarding the amendment. He offered the following statement of support:

"The Religious Equality Amendment is long overdue. An expansionist and wholly unprincipled interpretation of the so-called Establishment Clause of the First Amendment has relegated religious speech to a second-class status, the effect of which has been to intimidate Americans from fully exercising their right to religious liberty. When students are told that their voluntary statements of worship are impermissible at a school function, and when their football coaches are told that they cannot have a short, non-sectarian prayer in a huddle, there is something terribly wrong with the way the First Amendment is being interpreted. "It is ironic that the very people who are sounding the alarms over the Religious Equality Amendment are the same ones who made it necessary for such a law to be written in the first place. The Religious Equality Amendment seeks to restore the status quo ante, a condition that was found acceptable by the courts for nearly 200 years, and was embraced with enthusiasm by most Americans. It is high time that those who entertain a phobia

about religion not have their prejudices sustained by the courts."

The Catholic League is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American life without defamation or discrimination.