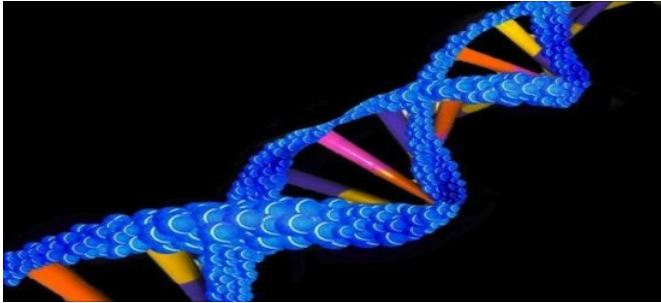


RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE GAY GENE



A Gallup poll published yesterday found that between 73 and 80 percent of the public consider the following issues to be either extremely important or very important in this year's presidential

election campaign: healthcare; unemployment; the federal budget deficit and national debt; international issues, including national defense and terrorism; and gas prices. But only 44 percent answered that way when asked about government policies concerning birth control.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue offered his thoughts on the data:

There is a reason why few care about government policies concerning birth control—the issue is a non-starter. Anyone who wants contraception can get it either inexpensively or for free, and no one running for president is threatening to change things. So why ask the question? The goal, clearly, is to take what is primarily a First Amendment right to religious liberty and turn it into a battle over the pill. When the public is asked about the right to a religious exemption, or the right to choose among competing insurance plans, the results are quite different.

Here's a thought experiment. Suppose there is a gay gene, and suppose prospective parents can learn whether a gay gene is present in their unborn baby. Now suppose a president proposes that employee insurance carriers, including religious non-profits, must cover abortions in those instances where prospective parents elect to abort their gay-gene carrying

unborn baby.

There are several issues here for a survey to consider: preventive health care; the First Amendment right to religious liberty; the public funding of abortion; and the intentional weeding out of the homosexual population. Now if the issue were framed as a debate over the propriety of the government to spend public funds for preventive health care, who would agree that this is an accurate way to pose the question?

Get it? It's time to stop playing the birth-control card and start addressing federal encroachment on the religious rights of Americans.