

RELIGIOUS NECKTIES BRANDED THREAT TO FREEDOM

Bus drivers in Vancouver, Washington have been warned that they are forbidden from wearing hats, vests or neckties that depict religious themes during the Christmas season. Their employer, C-TRAN, issued the following criteria for such apparel: "They are appropriate for work in a public agency. They do not contain offensive or controversial messages or pictures. They do not depict religious themes."

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, was happy that a league member brought this issue to his attention:

"We called the Human Resources Department of C-TRAN asking for a fax of the law that required them to ban apparel that depicted religious themes. They sent us the relevant section of the Constitution of the State of Washington that speaks to religious freedom and circled the operative sentence: 'No public money or property shall be appropriated for or applied to any religious worship, exercise or instruction, or the support of any religious establishment.'

"Now either the bureaucrats at C-TRAN are dishonest or they're just plain dumb. No public funds are involved in the decision of a bus driver to purchase his own tie with a picture of a nativity scene on it, and they know it. That is why C-TRAN stands alone in Washington on this issue.

"We called officials at Pierce Transit of Tacoma; SKAT system of Skagit County; Metro Transit of Seattle; Leavenworth; Longview; Mercer Island; and Port Angeles. None of them has such an absurd rule and indeed they offered that they have 'no problem' with any employee who wears a hat, vest or tie that depicts a religious theme.

"We are contacting the head of the transit union in Vancouver

asking him to protest this act of censorship. One way would be to ask bus drivers to wear a scarf with a religious theme emblazoned on it and then see what happens. Another way would be to meet the bullies in court."