

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS REJECTED



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on today's Senate vote to table the "Respect for Rights of Conscience Act":

The 51-48 vote to table an amendment by Sen. Roy Blunt that would guarantee rights of conscience for the employees of religious institutions does not end the debate.

There is a bill sponsored by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry that would also secure conscience rights for people of faith, and it has already garnered a near-majority of House members. Also available as a possible remedy are the rights encoded in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. And, of course, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the ObamaCare legislation later this month; a decision is expected in late spring.

The Obama administration has chosen to shut out the Catholic voice (save for the dissidents). Consider the following:

- Archbishop William Lori has said that there was no discussion between administration officials and the bishops prior to the decisions of January 20 and February 10 that effectively mandated Catholic institutions to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization.
- Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius has admitted under questioning that the Justice Department was never asked to consider the religious-rights implications of her draconian directive.
- Dr. Linda Rosenstock, who served on a committee of the

Institute of Medicine that was empowered to study the HHS mandate, said on Tuesday that at no time did anyone on the committee ever weigh the issue of religious rights.

Obama does not want to dialogue—he wants to dictate. Game on.