

REPUBLICAN OPERATIVES CROSS CHURCH-STATE LINES

The Catholic League's opposition to the selection process of the new House Chaplain has triggered outrage among Republicans. Some of the lobbying efforts have been improper and this is what Catholic League president William Donohue addressed today:

"If someone working for the Catholic Church, or for the Catholic League, were to call a congressman's office and tell his aide that 'You guys better come around on this,' it would be greeted with howls of protest. Not only would the congressman be screaming how this violated church and state, some would want to challenge the Church's tax exempt-status. Well, this just happened to us yesterday and the guilty party is Joe Eule, chief of staff for Congressman J.D. Hayworth, Republican from Arizona.

"The Catholic League is a thick-skinned organization that understands the legitimate right of everyone to criticize what we do. But it is wrong for the state to try to intimidate faith-based non-profit organizations: respect for church and state boundaries works both ways.

"Moreover, we don't need lectures from go-betweens for House Speaker Dennis Hastert telling us that we have stepped into the 'absolute major leagues of power politics,' and we are sick and tired of attempts to smear Father Timothy O'Brien.

"It is no wonder that more and more Americans are quitting both parties and becoming independents. But the bullies will not succeed and that is why we will not be deterred."