

SEN. BALDWIN REJECTS JUDICIAL NOMINEE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin's decision to reject a nominee to the federal bench:

Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin has told her home-state nominee to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Gordon Giampietro, that she will not support him by returning a favorable blue slip to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Giampietro, a former federal prosecutor, has impeccable credentials, but his support for marriage as the exclusive union between a man and a woman created controversy in some circles.

Baldwin's decision reeks of an anti-Catholic animus. She wants to punish someone who, despite his qualifications to serve on the federal bench, holds to the same conception of marriage as taught by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (as well as many other world religions): marriage is not open to members of the same sex. It is open only to those who have the prospect of creating a family, and that is not something that two men or two women are capable of doing.

Her decision is anti-Catholic because it effectively says that those Catholics who accept the teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, on the subject of marriage and the family, have no legitimate role to play in public life. It is important to note that if Giampietro were some kind of Catholic extremist, he would not have earned the unanimous support of the Wisconsin bishops.

What Baldwin is doing is setting a dangerous precedent, one that is grounded in bigotry. She is up for reelection this year and has now effectively alienated a wide swath of the

Wisconsin electorate, a move that could prove to be politically suicidal in November.

Senator Charles Grassley, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has the power to grant Giampietro's nomination a hearing, based on the fact that a favorable blue slip was returned by Wisconsin's other senator, Ron Johnson. But Grassley has indicated that he is not generally disposed to doing so for nominees to the federal district court (he prefers to exercise his prerogative when nominees to the federal circuit court are being blocked).

Grassley's thinking is not without merit. However, the fact that he is not unequivocally opposed to making an exception for district court nominees leaves him with an option. Such an exception should be made with Giampietro's nomination. The role that religious bigotry is playing in this case warrants it.

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