

SEN. LIEBERMAN'S REMARKS ON RELIGION AND POLITICS WELCOME: CHOICE OF VENUE IS NOT

In the past 24 hours, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and American Atheists, Inc. have criticized Senator Joseph Lieberman for his remarks on religion and politics.

The ADL said the remarks given by Senator Lieberman at a Protestant church last Sunday were inappropriate: "Language such as this risks alienating the American people." Similarly, American Atheists said that Senator Lieberman's "'assurances' about the role of religion and politics ring hollow considering his hostility toward rational thinking Americans."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Senator Lieberman is to be commended, not criticized, for discussing the public role of religion. For too long, public office holders have succumbed to elite pressure by silencing themselves on this issue. Senator Lieberman not only has a First Amendment right to exercise his freedom of speech, he has a moral obligation to share with Americans his religiously-informed vision of the polity.

"The problem the Catholic League has with the speech that Senator Lieberman gave last Sunday at the Fellowship Chapel in Detroit is not with its content, but with its venue: elected officials and candidates for public office should not be stumping in houses of worship. Take, for example, what happened last Sunday. Just before Lieberman took to the pulpit, the pastor of the church (who is also the president of

the local NAACP chapter), Rev. Wendell Anthony, gave Lieberman a tacit endorsement and then criticized George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

“Republicans and Democrats alike are guilty of campaigning in Protestant churches and synagogues. It is time this abuse was ended and it is time for ministers and rabbis to follow the lead of Catholic priests by not extending invitations to speak from the pulpit in the first place.”