

# ST. LOUIS ABORTION BILL IS A DISASTER

Bill Donohue comments on a bill being considered by St. Louis lawmakers:

Board Bill 203 is under review by the St. Louis Board of Aldermen. It would amend Ordinance 67119, an anti-discrimination bill, by adding “pregnancy and reproductive health decisions as protected classes.”

St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson is properly opposed to this bill, saying it seeks to make St. Louis “a sanctuary city for abortion.” To make matters worse, there is no religious exemption. As such, it would mean that Catholic non-profits, such as schools and social service agencies, could be fined for maintaining their opposition to abortion in matters of employment and insurance coverage.

So as not to be misunderstood, the Catholic League would oppose this bill even if a religious exemption were granted: government should not be in the business of granting additional protections to those engaged in abortion services. But it is striking nonetheless that the proponents of this bill are dismissive of religious exemptions.

On the one hand, Bill 203 seeks to include “pregnancy and reproductive health” issues as deserving the same protective status as that of other classes defined in Ordinance 67119; on the other hand, it seeks to exclude the plain language of that bill as it applies to religious exemptions.

For example, when it comes to housing, 67119 exempts “a religious organization, association, or society, or any nonprofit institution or organization operated, supervised or controlled by or in conjunction with a religious organization.” This language is missing from 203. Its only

religious exemption extends to hiring by schools and colleges.

The proponents of this bill want to have it both ways: they cite Ordinance 67119 as grounds to include their proposed protected classes, but their interest in being inclusive stops short of providing the religious exemptions provided by that law.

Catholics will never compromise on life and death issues: the first human right is the right to be born.

We commend Archbishop Carlson for his courageous leadership on Board Bill 203. He deserves the wide support of Catholics, as well as all those opposed to expanding abortion rights in St. Louis.

*To read Donohue's letter to St. Louis Aldermen, click [here](#).*