

# NEW YORK STATE BILL THREATENS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

On Monday, the New York State Assembly passed a bill that would require all employers to provide contraceptive health insurance coverage for its employees. The Assembly explicitly rejected a religious conscience protection clause, which was found acceptable to the New York State Senate. A compromise measure will now be sought.

The New York State Catholic Bishops oppose any bill that does not allow Catholic health care facilities and health maintenance organizations the right to opt out of any mandated contraceptive and infertility coverage. Catholic League president William Donohue defended the position of the bishops today:

“Any bill which forces religious organizations to relinquish their doctrinal prerogatives and institutional autonomy is an expression of intolerance. The diversity that marks our nation’s religious institutions is one of our most treasured assets, and that is why attempts to impose a secular agenda—via the heavy hand of the state—is strikingly un-American. Separation of church and state cuts both ways: just as it is wrong for a religious institution to strong-arm state agencies to bow to religious precepts, it is wrong for the state to coerce religious institutions to accept programs that effectively vitiate their *raison d’être*.

“Forty-six states currently have waivers for employers or insurers based on religious objections, and New York is one of the forty-six. There is absolutely no grassroots support for any initiative that would upset the status quo, making unintelligible the enthusiasm some legislators have for this Assembly bill. Most troubling of all is a remark by Sheldon Silver, the Assembly Speaker, who said that a religious

conscience exemption would be 'taking religious freedom a little too far.' Silver needs to explain to Roman Catholics why he thinks their rights are being pushed too far (after all, whose freedoms was he thinking of?). Though he may not have meant it that way, such language strikes us as being downright anti-Catholic."

---

## **FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS DESERVE WIDER ROLE**

President George W. Bush's support for faith-based programs drew a strong endorsement today from Catholic League president William Donohue. Here is the text of his remarks:

"Faith-based social service programs work. The empirical evidence is so overwhelming that there really isn't anything to debate. Consider, for example, the following.

"Teen Challenge is a church-sponsored rehabilitation program that has worked wonders with troubled youth in New York. Hardened adult criminals have found hope in Prison Fellowship Ministries. The extensive church network that marks Michigan's Project Zero program has resulted in moving legions of people from welfare to work; the Putting Families First Foundation in South Carolina and the Faith and Families Project in Mississippi have also garnered an impressive record in dealing with this issue. True Love Waits and Sex Respect are two abstinence-based programs that have delivered remarkable success rates in dealing with the problem of teenage illegitimacy. And the charitable services that Catholic, Protestant and Jewish agencies have long provided are acknowledged by nearly everyone for their effectiveness.

“Faith-based initiatives not only work better than their secular counterparts, they do so at a fraction of the cost. It is the spiritual dimension of these programs that accounts for their success.

“The Catholic League not only supports faith based social service programs, it believes that a) the time has come to phase out most of the secular initiatives and b) we need to establish a new partnership between church and state, one that affords greater room for religious organizations to exercise their spiritual component. This can only be achieved if there is greater tolerance for the public expression of religion.”

---

## **OPPOSITION TO JAMES HORMEL WAS NOT ANTI-GAY**

At a news conference yesterday, James Hormel contended that Senator John Ashcroft opposed his confirmation as ambassador to Luxembourg “solely because I am a gay man.” Senator Ashcroft has denied this was the reason he opposed the Hormel appointment. The Catholic League, which led the opposition to the Hormel appointment at the time, believes that Hormel’s accusation is unfair and without basis in fact. The league’s president, William Donohue, explained why:

“On January 21, 1998, the Catholic League issued a news release formally opposing the nomination of James Hormel as U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. We did so because of Hormel’s reaction to an anti-Catholic group, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, during the 1996 San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Parade. During the parade, Hormel joined two broadcasters from KOFY-TV in welcoming the nun-

dressed drag queens, laughing at their antics. Worse than this was Hormel's refusal to dissociate himself from this Catholic-bashing incident. On December 19, 1997, Senator Tim Hutchinson gave Hormel an opportunity to 'repudiate those who would mock the church,' but the would-be ambassador declined comment.

"On June 19, 1998, I expressly stated in a news release that 'James Hormel should not be denied the post of ambassadorship to Luxembourg on the basis of his sexual orientation.' But I did say that he should be denied this position because of his tolerance for anti-Catholicism. On January 13, 1999, I wrote to every U.S. senator asking that the Hormel nomination be rejected. In a letter dated April 26, 1999, Senator John Ashcroft wrote to me saying, 'I believe that Mr. Hormel is not an appropriate nominee for the post of U.S. Ambassador.' Nothing in his letter gave even the slightest hint of an anti-gay bias.

"The issue all along has been Hormel's reluctance to distance himself from anti-Catholic bigots, not his sexual orientation. It is time to set the record straight."

---

## **BUSH VOUCHER PLAN DESERVES WIDE SUPPORT**

The Bush administration today announced a plan for education that includes a limited voucher program. The plan would give schools that receive Title 1 federal money – money designated for poor children – three years to improve job performance to meet federal standards. If the schools fail to improve in that time, parents would receive \$1,500 from Title 1 money to be

used for tutoring or private schooling.

Catholic League president William Donohue took the occasion to explain why the league supports the plan:

“Vouchers are a matter of civil rights. The right to access quality education, particularly for poor children, is a basic right that has long been recognized and supported by Americans. To deny children that right because the neighborhood in which they live forces them to attend a substandard public school is a violation of their basic rights.

“Voucher programs have a solid record of leveling the playing field and giving parents freedom of choice in the education of their children. It improves public education, while improving opportunities for all children regardless of their economic status.

“The Bush plan is a starting point toward assuring educational opportunities for all Americans. While education vouchers should be available for every child, we support this initial step in recognizing an essential civil right.

“The track record of Catholic schools in the inner cities has proven to be the greatest single engine of social mobility. Anyone who is not anti-poor should support this measure.”

---

## **HYPOCRISY                      MARKS                      “STOP ASHCROFT COALITION”**

On Tuesday, a press conference was held in Washington by many organizations opposed to the nomination of Senator John

Ashcroft for the position of U.S. Attorney General; 45 organizations pledged their opposition to his candidacy. Many of those opposed have cited the honorary degree Senator Ashcroft received from Bob Jones University as critical to their position. However, as Catholic League president William Donohue points out, there is a lot of hypocrisy marking this effort:

“The Catholic League has criticized Bob Jones University in the past for its anti-Catholicism and continues to do so today. Unlike the school’s racist policy on interracial dating, which has changed, none of its anti-Catholic statements have been rescinded. That is why the league welcomes allies who want to join us in opposing the school’s position, but we want genuine allies, not phonies.

“To be specific, People for the American Way, the National Organization for Women, the Human Rights Campaign and Planned Parenthood have all said that one reason why they oppose Senator Ashcroft is the anti-Catholic nature of Bob Jones University and his link to the school. Yet all four organizations have, in fact, made comments or engaged in activities that are patently anti-Catholic.

“In addition, the anti-Ashcroft coalition is populated by organizations that have been mobilized to attack the Vatican’s U.N. status. They are: Center for Reproductive Law and Policy; Center for Women Policy Studies; National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL); National Abortion Federation; National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association; National Organization for Women; Physicians for Reproductive Health and Choice; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; and the Sierra Club.

“Unlike Senator Ashcroft, who is not a Catholic basher, many of those who now oppose him have shamelessly contributed to anti-Catholicism.”

---

# LARA FLYNN BOYLE ADMITS TO HER STUPIDITY

Actress Lara Flynn Boyle, the star of ABC's "The Practice," has told *Vanity Fair* how horrible her Catholic upbringing was. "I got a terrible education from the nuns and the Jesuits," she said in the February issue. "They kept flunking me and saying I wasn't participating. I grew up thinking I was stupid."

Boyle also confessed that she "used to lie in confession all the time" and considers herself a "bastard" because her father had his first marriage annulled.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, had a few things to say about Boyle's comments today:

"The fact that the Jesuits kept on flunking Lara Flynn Boyle is hardly reason for her to blame them. They were just doing their job. Would she have preferred that they lie, as she is wont to do in the confessional? No matter, Boyle's self-perception—that she is stupid—may not be an easy pill to swallow, but it sure beats self-delusory visions of brilliance. She should at least thank the Jesuits for this.

"The Catholic Church does not regard the children born to a marriage that has been annulled as bastards, but the Church has no power over those who persist in labeling themselves as such. We suggest that Boyle seek out a member of the Marianist community (the Jesuits are obviously not a good choice) for remedial education."

---

# PATRICIA IRELAND DISCOVERS ANTI-CATHOLICISM

In a conversation yesterday with Greta Van Susteren and Roger Cossack on CNN's "Burden of Proof," National Organization for Women president Patricia Ireland expressed concern for anti-Catholicism. The subject was the nomination of Senator John Ashcroft to the post of Attorney General. In the course of the discussion, it was mentioned that the Senator accepted of an honorary degree from Bob Jones University in 1999. When Cossack said the school had banned interracial dating until recently, Ireland commented, "It's a very anti-Catholic school."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"The Catholic League always welcomes those who are genuinely concerned about anti-Catholicism to speak out on this important subject. But we don't like being played for a fool. Not only has Patricia Ireland never before spoken about this subject, she and her organization have contributed to anti-Catholicism. For example, she protested the visit of Pope John Paul II to the U.S. in 1993, saying, 'Women will not be silenced. We're going to keep on until the Pope stops calling U.S. Catholic feminists pagan.' Obviously, she offered no evidence for this outrageous remark, for the pope never said it.

"NOW has joined the anti-Catholic campaign of Frances Kissling to discredit the Vatican by subverting its permanent observer status at the U.N. It has formally attacked the Catholic Church for maintaining hospitals that do not allow abortions,



holding that such hospitals should be denied public funding. In 1994, NOW held the Catholic Church responsible for the killing of an abortion doctor in Massachusetts. And so on.

“Patricia Ireland is a phony and a professed enemy of the Catholic Church. It matters not a whit that she calls herself Catholic. If she wants to oppose Senator Ashcroft, let her do so. But she should stop exploiting the issue of anti-Catholicism to advance her political agenda.”

---

## UNACCEPTABLE APOLOGY BY TIME OUT NEW YORK

*Time Out New York* magazine has announced that it will run an apology in its next issue for celebrating the death of John Cardinal O'Connor. The celebratory comments were made in the January 4-11 edition: the death of the New York Archbishop was rated as the best event of 2000 in its Gay & Lesbian “Best and Worst of 2000” listing.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, explained the league's reaction today:

“The apology by *Time Out New York* is unacceptable and is therefore rejected. We reject the apology for several reasons.

“The magazine's editor, Joe Angio, now says ‘We regret offending anyone, but we don't dispute the contention that [O'Connor] was a menace to the gay community.’ Menace to the gay community? Among those who are a menace to the gay community are gay activists like those who work at *Time Out New York*; it is their promotion of reckless sex that causes so

many homosexuals to die prematurely.

“If the attack on Cardinal O’Connor were an anomaly, it could be argued that the apology should be accepted. But on the contrary, *Time Out New York* has a track record of Catholic bashing. In addition, this was not said in the heat of debate on radio or TV—it was a written statement that was approved by several editors.

“Unfortunately, *Time Out New York*’s vicious attack is now being supported by Carmen Vasquez, a spokeswoman for the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. She is quoted as saying that Cardinal O’Connor ‘made the lives of gays and lesbians miserable with his public comments and opposition to their way of life.’ Wrong. It is the death-style favored by so many gays and lesbians that makes their lives miserable. Indeed, had they practiced the restraint that the Church teaches, many more would be alive to discuss this issue.”

---

## THE CULTURAL FASCISTS AT TIME OUT NEW YORK

The January 4-11 edition of *Time Out New York* magazine features a discussion of the best and worst of 2000 in many categories, ranging from Dance to Sports. In the Gay & Lesbian section, the top listing for “The Best” of 2000 (found on page 91) reads as follows:

### **Cardinal John O’Connor kicks the bucket**

The press eulogized him as a saint,  
when in fact, the pious creep was a  
stuck-in-the-1950s, antigay menace.

Good riddance!

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“There are not too many magazines that would celebrate the death of John Cardinal O’Connor. Indeed, I can’t think of any, other than *Time Out New York*. Why they did so is not hard to explain. The homosexual-oriented publication has for years bemoaned deaths due to AIDS while simultaneously running articles and advice columns that encourage the very behaviors that are the proximate cause of the disease. What Cardinal O’Connor represented to these self-destructive souls was holiness, and that is why they’re so angry with him—he reminds them of everything they’re not.

“While *Time Out New York* was urging homosexuals to live a life of abandon—one that resulted in death due to AIDS—Cardinal O’Connor was personally attending to the needs of these persons in hospitals. That he also presided over the largest private provider of care for AIDS patients in New York is something that the surviving family members of those treated will not forget. Now ask them whether they agree with *Time Out*’s characterization of Cardinal O’Connor.

“This isn’t merely anti-Catholicism at work—it’s cultural fascism.”

---

## HEATHER GRAHAM’S SEXUAL HANG-UPS

Actress Heather Graham, of “Austin Powers” fame, took to bashing the Catholic Church in an interview in the February edition of *Talk* magazine.

As reported today in the *New York Post*, Graham blames the Church for stifling her sex life when she was growing up. "Why do I have to do what all these men are saying? Why is a women's sexuality supposed to be evil?"

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, addressed Graham's comments today:

"Poor Heather. Life has been so unfair to her. Having been subjected to the sexual reticence of the Catholic Church, she is now free as a bird to throw off all her shackles. So she now accepts film roles posing either as a slut or a porn star, reducing herself so low that she actually partook in a 'butt licking' scene with Robert Downey Jr. in 'Two Girls and a Guy.' But much to Heather's chagrin, that scene never made it past the censors. No doubt they were Catholic.

"It is our hope that Heather soon gets a grip on her sexual hang-ups. She doesn't need therapy, just some counseling by a priest."