

CALIFORNIA BILL ON CONFESSIONAL SEAL AMENDED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest news regarding the attempt to break the seal of the confessional:

On May 16, the California Senate Appropriations Committee conducted a hearing on a bill by State Sen. Jerry Hill, SB 360, that would gut the seal of confession, all in the name of catching sexual molesters looking for absolution. Some amendments were passed which, while a definite improvement, are still unsatisfactory.

Hill's latest iteration maintains the seal of confession for most Catholics. But he wants to make an exception when (a) a priest is hearing the confession of a co-worker ("another person employed in the same facility or location as that clergy member") and (b) when a priest is hearing the confession of another priest ("between a clergy member and another clergy member"). The assumption, which is invidious, is that many priests are predators.

Our sacraments should never be considered the legitimate domain of the state. This is a classic example of state encroachment on religion. Not only that, it is aimed at only one religion, despite what Hill's backers say.

Imagine saying that a psychiatrist can continue his privileged confidential relationship with his patients except when he counsels a colleague! Similarly, imagine saying the same to lawyers and journalists—they can keep their communication with their clients and sources confidential save for those that involve their co-workers!

No psychiatrist, lawyer, or journalist worth his salt would consider this a compromise: they would label it a travesty of

justice and pursue it in the courts. That's what Sen. Hill is faced with.

We implore Sen. Hill to withdraw his bill. There are many things that can and should be done to combat the sexual abuse of minors, but not among them are proposals that do violence to the First Amendment. If he stands fast, he will lose in the courts.

We are asking our California members to contact their state senator. Click [here](#) to do so.

MAHER AND "SNL" WALLOW IN FILTH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on two attacks on the Catholic Church that occurred over the weekend:

In a time when calls for civility are everywhere noted, there has been a surge in the most obscene attacks on Catholicism. The kind of filth that Bill Maher engaged in on his Friday night HBO show was unprecedented, even for him. "Saturday Night Live" also wallowed in dirt, showing just how far NBC's standards have collapsed.

Maher and the "SNL" writers are very sick people. They are also cowards: They shout to the moon over the need for more tolerance for their favorite protected groups, but then descend to the gutter when discussing Catholics.

On the May 18 edition of "SNL," Colin Jost said, "Pope Francis ended a Vatican summit by promising the Catholic Church would confront the clergy sex abuse head-on, instead of their usual

way, face down, ass up.”

Homosexual priests are the obvious target of this sick homosexual joke. The homosexual writers for “SNL” obviously wrote it. Their affinity for filth is disturbing.

Maher’s vicious rant showed that he is a little man in more ways than one. He not only showcased his bigotry in a lengthy diatribe, he showed how low he can go by making several *ad hominem* attacks. His stupidity was also on grand display.

Catholicism, Maher said, is a “strange cult.” Brilliant. The fact is that all religions start as cults but most wither away; only a small minority blossom to the level of a religion. Christianity has been around for over 2,000 years. Even Maher should be able to figure out what that means.

Maher says we have too many Catholics on the Supreme Court. Again, he has a hard time with math. He says the Supreme Court is 67% Catholic, but Catholics are only 21% of the population. Never mind that Catholics make up closer to 25% of the population, they are 55% of the high court, not 67% (he probably thinks Gorsuch is Catholic).

Why didn’t Maher note that Jews are only 2% of the population yet make up one-third of the Supreme Court? Is it because he can’t do arithmetic? Or is it because he likes Jews and hates Catholics (his mother was Jewish and his father was Catholic)? Probably both.

Maher is consumed with hate. He hates lots of Catholics. On May 17, he demonstrated his viciousness by attacking Bill Barr, Patrick Buchanan, Sean Hannity, Bill O’Reilly, Rick Santorum, Bill Bennett, Robert Bork, Newt Gingrich, Mel Gibson (and his father), Antonin Scalia, Brett Kavanaugh, Clarence Thomas, and Thomas’ wife.

What’s driving his hatred would surely qualify him to see an exorcist.

Morality. That's what Maher hates. He notes that "there is nothing about morality in the Constitution." It's implied, stupid. "The Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people." Those are the words of John Adams. Maher is unhappy because the Constitution wasn't meant for him.

Maher's hatred of morality is a reflection of his fondness for promiscuity. He rails against the aforementioned Catholics because they talk too much about right and wrong. By contrast, Maher only talks about what is wrong, and he does so in a celebratory way. His internal moral compass is set at zero.

This is a man, a little one for sure, whose natural embrace of what is morally wrong allows him to argue that Brett Kavanaugh wrote the Starr Report about the Predator-in-Chief so he could discuss "Clinton's c***. "

Maher concluded his berserk rant by saying, "there was a sexual revolution and you lost." No, we practicing Catholics didn't lose. All the "free spirits" who thought they could beat nature by treating their bodies like a toilet lost. Their lives, not ours, ended in sudden death.

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***NOTE: I WILL ASK FOR A MEETING WITH JOHN STANKEY, THE NEW CEO
OF WarnerMedia, WHICH OWNS HBO.***

RELIGIOUS DISSIDENTS ATTACK RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on who is supporting the latest attack on religious liberty

The Equality Act, as I recently stated, “is the most comprehensive assault on religious liberty, the right to life, and privacy rights ever packaged into one bill in the history of the United States.” I enumerated [twelve](#) reasons why it is so draconian. Joining in defense of it are people who proclaim to be religious, yet are doing everything they can to eviscerate religious liberty, all in the name of the radical LGBT agenda.

On the Catholic side, supporters include NETWORK, the “nuns on the bus” group that is at war with the bishops on this issue, as well as many others. Led by Sr. Simone Campbell, the “social justice lobby” is dishonestly framing the Equality Act as if it were merely championing rights in the workplace. It is not.

This bill is designed to strip the Catholic Church, and other religions, of all the religious exemptions that have traditionally been afforded by federal and state legislation. It would also mean that men who declare themselves to be women would be permitted to compete in women’s sports and use their locker rooms. This has nothing to do with fairness in the workplace.

New Ways Ministry, a breakaway Catholic organization, is also supporting the Equality Act, as is Dignity USA, another group that is more pro-gay than it is pro-Catholic. John Gehring of Faith in Public Life, who claims to be a Catholic leader while being bankrolled by the atheist-billionaire George Soros, is also praising the legislation (he posted his comments on the

website of Commonweal, a dissident Catholic outlet).

Other religious groups supporting this attack on religious liberty include the Interfaith Alliance, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Religious Institute, and the United Methodist Church (it's a sure bet most Methodists have no idea about this decision).

Naturally, there is a whole host of secular organizations supporting this attack on religious liberty. They include the ACLU, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Center for American Progress (led by Clinton operatives), and the ADL.

None of this is surprising. These entities, and there are many more like them, have worked against religious liberty for years. Now they have committed themselves to the most radical assault on the First Amendment ever launched in the Congress of the United States. That many of them are dishonestly clothed in the robes of religion makes them all the more contemptible.

PRO-INFANTICIDE GOV. CALLED A MODERATE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how the media are covering a supporter of infanticide:

Infanticide is the deliberate killing of infants, either by active or passive measures. In Nazi Germany, they preferred the former; in this country, we prefer the latter.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo says it is okay to allow a baby born alive as a result of a botched abortion to die unattended by hospital staff. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam agrees. The latest to agree is Montana Gov. Steve Bullock: He vetoed the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act last week.

The difference between these three men is that only Bullock is running for president; he announced this week. The media know that he is okay with allowing a newborn baby who survives an abortion to die without any medicinal care whatsoever. Do you know what they are calling him? A moderate.

The following media outlets described Bullock as a moderate *after* he vetoed the bill and *after* he announced his bid for the presidency: Fox News, CNN, CBS, NPR, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post* (in a blog column.) Only the *Los Angeles Times* made even a passing reference to his veto of a bill that would protect newborns. The most accurate coverage was given by the *Washington Times*.

We have come to a new junction in American life when those who support infanticide are branded as moderate. What would it take for a governor to be labeled an extremist? Would he have to say that it should be legal for a mother to decide with her doctor to put down her newborn baby for up to a year after birth?

Peter Singer is a Princeton professor known as the “father” of animal rights. He’s way out there. He says chimps should be given some of the same rights as humans. But he is also known for his advocacy of selective infanticide. He says some defective children should undergo a trial period after birth while a decision is being made about putting them to death, and that in any event parents should be allowed to exterminate their disabled babies.

Would the media call Singer a moderate as well? They obviously don’t see him as a wacko at Princeton.

Gov. Bullock can get away with this because the media are overwhelmingly in the pro-abortion camp, and, more recently, in the pro-infanticide camp as well. We live in sick times.

CALIFORNIA CONFESSIONAL BILL IS ABSURD

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a California bill that threatens religious liberty:

Lawyers have attorney-client privileges, journalists are allowed to keep their sources confidential, and priests have “penitential communication” privileges. In all three cases, it has long been deemed necessary to afford these rights lest injustice prevails. But now the latter right is under attack in California.

In February, California State Senator Jerry Hill introduced Senate Bill 360 that would require the clergy to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the authorities, without regard to the circumstances. It is obviously aimed at destroying the seal of confession in the Catholic Church. Furthermore, it would obliterate the longstanding line allowing for separation of church and state. Justice demands that the bill be defeated.

The bill will now be given a hearing tomorrow before the Senate Appropriations Committee, and if it succeeds it would go to the Senate at the end of the month.

Priests are already required to report suspected child abuse cases to law enforcement, save for communication learned in the confessional. Neither Sen. Hill nor anyone else has

explained what broke.

Hill, who has a 100% rating from Planned Parenthood, has invented a problem, offering a remedy that is patently unconstitutional.

News Flash: Almost all cases of priestly sexual abuse took place in the last century, mostly between 1965 and 1985. The data are not contestable. If Hill were right—that there is an existential crisis in the Catholic Church—he should be able to provide evidence. He cannot. Neither can anyone else.

There are approximately 50,000 members of the Catholic clergy in the U.S., and the average number of credible accusations made against them in any given year over the past decade has been in the single digits. If Hill wants to learn where a crisis exists, he ought to review the data for the sexual abuse of minors in the public schools. His head would explode.

Senate Bill 360 says that “the clergy-penitent privilege has been abused on a large scale, resulting in the unreported and systemic abuse of thousands of children across multiple denominations and faiths.” This is preposterous. There is absolutely no evidence to support such an outrageous claim. On this basis alone, the bill should be defeated.

Does anyone really think that a child abuser is going to confess his sin in the confessional? The idea is absurd. Father Roger Landry, a well respected priest and writer, knows his way around this issue.

“No abuser, not to mention others guilty of serious crimes,” he says, “would come to confession if he knew that the confessor was basically a state informant who would betray his confidence.” There is no plausible rebuttal to Landry’s observation.

Hill is not only wrong, he is wasting lawmakers’ time on the taxpayers’ dime. He is not going to win, even if his bill

passes the legislature.

In 2014, the Catholic League signed an amicus brief in support of a Louisiana priest, Father Jeff Bayhi (and the Diocese of Baton Rouge), for refusing to disclose to the authorities a conversation he had in the confessional.

We lost in the State Supreme Court, but that decision was overturned by the State District Court in February 2016; Father Bayhi was not required to break the seal of the confessional. In October, 2016, the Louisiana Supreme Court upheld that ruling.

The secrecy of the confessional is integral to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and has been treated as such since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Canon law says the seal is “inviolable.” In other words, it is non-negotiable.

This issue has national implications. As such we are asking everyone to contact California State Senator Anthony Portantino, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He is on our side and will preside over the May 16 hearing on this bill. He needs to know of your support. See #KeepTheSeal for social media coverage.

Contact: senator.portantino@senate.ca.gov

EQUALITY ACT IS MADNESS ON STILTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Equality Act:

The Equality Act is the most comprehensive assault on

religious liberty, the right to life, and privacy rights ever packaged into one bill in the history of the United States. It passed the House Judiciary Committee last week and is scheduled for a vote this week, possibly on Thursday.

This act is based on the idea that sexually challenged men and women—those who think they can transition to the other sex—should be treated as if they were members of a minority race. There is no basis in either the natural law or the positive law for such a judgment: “gender identity” is not analogous to race.

Unlike race, which is a natural characteristic, “gender identity” is an unnatural condition. Moreover, the former is an ascribed attribute; the latter is an act of volition. They have nothing in common.

Here are 12 reasons why the Equality Act is so insane.

- It would mean that homosexuals and the sexually challenged would qualify for affirmative action. Though the 1964 Civil Rights Act explicitly did not allow for preferential treatment, it has been interpreted by the courts that way. Therefore, if homosexuals and the sexually challenged are included in this historic piece of legislation, they would get preferential treatment in hiring.
- The act would effectively gut the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, eviscerating important religious rights.
- State laws that protect religious liberty would be gutted.
- Freedom of speech, belief, and thought, as the U.S. Bishops have said, would be put “at risk.” Conscience rights are the most important of all rights. When they are attacked, all liberties are jeopardized.
- Taxpayer-funded abortions would become a reality.
- The bishops stress that “Houses of worship and other

religious spaces will be turned into places of 'public accommodation.'"

- Adoption and foster care providers would have their rights stripped.
- Catholic hospitals would no longer be allowed to govern as Catholic facilities, threatening healthcare for everyone, especially the poor.
- Starting in kindergarten, students would be indoctrinated in the LGBT agenda.
- Parental rights would be decimated.
- Men who transition to female could compete in women's sports, effectively working against the rights of women.
- Privacy rights would be a thing of the past. As has already happened, a man who thinks of himself as a woman would be allowed to use the women's locker room, parading around with male genitalia. In normal times, he would be arrested for indecent exposure.

If anyone thinks this is an exaggeration, check out what has happened to religious liberty in New Jersey and Ohio where Catholic hospitals have been targeted. Unless they agree to perform a hysterectomy on a woman who claims to be a man, they can be sued. The ACLU has been suing Catholic hospitals all over the nation trying to force them to adopt its anti-Catholic agenda. While it typically loses, this legislation will reverse that record.

All persons are equal in the eyes of God, and that certainly includes the sexually challenged. But no society grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition is required to sabotage its heritage in the name of truly bizarre notions of liberty and equality.

Those who fantasize that they are a member of the opposite sex, and take steps to achieve that result, suffer from a mental disorder. The research on this subject is clear. Years following sex reassignment surgery, the suicide rate spikes for those who undergo this operation. They need our help, and

our prayers. What they don't need is pandering or affirmation.

Even those radical feminists and lesbians who belong to the Women's Liberation Front are opposed to the Equality Act. They are certainly more enlightened than the big corporations who are supporting it.

If the American people knew more about this act, they would be opposed to it by a large margin, and this is doubly true of parents. This isn't about fairness—it's about a war on religion, privacy, and common sense. The Equality Act is madness on stilts.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE'S TRUTHFUL ADDRESS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Vice President Mike Pence's speech at Liberty University:

On May 11, Vice President Mike Pence spoke at Liberty University's Commencement, offering a stirring address. "The truth is," he said, "we live in a time when the freedom of religion is under assault." He cited a report detailing how Christians are being persecuted more than any other religion today. Indeed, the very next day, six people, including a priest, were killed during a Sunday Mass by Islamists in Burkina Faso, a northwestern African nation; the church was burnt to the ground.

Pence also talked about attacks on religion in the United States. He said that "we live in a time when it's become acceptable and even fashionable to ridicule and even discriminate against people of faith." He cited as an example

the reaction on the part of “the media and the secular Left” to his wife’s teaching at a Christian elementary school earlier this year; she was vilified for doing so.

The vice president was right to say that “these attacks are un-American.” He was also right to say that “Some of the loudest voices for tolerance today have little tolerance for traditional Christian beliefs.” He didn’t hold back in his admonition to the graduating class. He warned that “you’re going to be asked not just to tolerate things that violate your faith; you’re going to be asked to endorse them. You’re going to be asked to bow down to the idols of the popular culture.”

If anyone wants proof that Pence is right, just read about the attacks on religious freedom coming from left-wing gay rights activists. They never stop. Their goal is not tolerance—they want affirmation, and they want to eviscerate the rights of those with whom they disagree.

Pence does not exaggerate. Just last week the Catholic League called upon state lawmakers in Pennsylvania to initiate a vote of censure against Brian Sims, an LGBT activist and member of the PA House of Representatives. He recently badgered, and placed in danger, an elderly Catholic woman in a totally unprovoked attack. Her crime? She was praying the rosary outside a Planned Parenthood clinic. Sims previously victimized three Catholic teenage girls for the same “offense.”

What Sims did was fascistic, but the media did not call him out for this the way they should have.

Already, Pence is being hammered by Charles Pierce, a left-wing secularist who hates Christianity. In an article posted on the website of Esquire, he calls Pence a “snowflake and drama queen.” Is that what he would call the woman and the girls who were victimized by Sims? That’s what Pence was

getting at—serious stuff—not some stupid joke.

The Catholic League's website provides all the evidence one needs to demonstrate the veracity of Pence's remarks. Congratulations to Vice President Mike Pence for telling the truth about the unhealthy state of religious liberty and the positive steps that the Trump administration is taking to remedy this situation.

WASHINGTON POST WRONG ON CHURCH REFORMS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an editorial in Saturday's *Washington Post* on reforms released by the Vatican:

It would be hard to find a more wrongheaded editorial on the recently released Vatican reforms on clergy sexual abuse than was published May 11 by the *Washington Post*.

"The essential problem" of clergy sexual abuse, the paper says, lies squarely with the bishops for "enabling pedophile priests." Wrong: The molesting priests were homosexuals, not pedophiles, and while some bishops acted badly, had homosexual priests not acted out in the first place there would have been no role for the bishops. The "essential problem" is the miscreant priest, not his bishop.

The editorial is furious that the bishops will remain in charge of investigations, criticizing their "all but absolute" authority.

When sexual misconduct occurs at the *Washington Post*, who

authorizes a probe? The reporters don't do it. Outside investigators don't make that decision. It falls to the top brass at the paper, doesn't it? In short, it falls to those who exercise "all but absolute" authority.

What makes this editorial so scandalous is the astounding duplicity of the *Washington Post*. Just recently it was accused of killing a story by Irin Carmon and Amy Brittain who were looking into the alleged sexual misconduct of "60 Minutes" executive producer Jeff Fager. The top brass at the paper has a cozy relationship with the program and, it is charged, didn't want to dig any deeper into Fager's problems.

Given the irresponsibility of the top brass at the *Washington Post*, should they not outsource all future cases of sexual misconduct to outside investigators? Time for these hypocrites to take some of their own medicine before lecturing the pope.

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NEW SEX ABUSE REFORMS WELCOMED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on new sexual abuse reforms announced by the Vatican:

After much delay, the Vatican has finally set forth reforms to combat clergy sexual abuse. Fortunately, they are comprehensive and meaningful. Due to widely different cultural practices, reforms are not easy to craft for global institutions. Those who wrote these strictures did a commendable job.

The reforms target a wide range of persons victimized by sexual misconduct: minors, "vulnerable" adults (those who are physically or mentally challenged), seminarians, nuns—all are covered. In addition to coerced sexual acts, possession of child pornography qualifies as an offense.

What is perhaps most refreshing about these reforms is the dramatic break with the protracted pace of previous initiatives. The norms go into effect, worldwide, on June 1. The senior bishop in the area, known as the local metropolitan, has 90 days to complete an investigation. Moreover, the Vatican has just 30 days to render a decision on whether to pursue the case.

The laity will have a place at the table. Bishops can draw on their expertise in many areas while conducting an investigation. Safeguarding the rights of whistleblowers is also a step in the right direction. As important as anything, the due process rights of the accused will be honored.

Bishops will be expected to follow the civil law in their diocese regarding reporting alleged offenses, and there are penalties for those who do not. Bishops are also required not to interfere with civil probes of accused priests.

It must be stressed that structural reforms can only do so much. Canon law has long provided guidance for how to handle clergy sexual abuse, but it was ignored by some bishops. At bottom, there must be a sincere commitment to following the norms, and a heady dose of common sense as well.

Naturally, the reforms are being denounced by those who perpetually find fault with anything the Church does to remedy this problem.

Anne Barrett Doyle of BishopAccountability, an entity which has made serious and bogus accusations against some bishops, is not happy. "It's not nearly enough," she said. It's never enough.

Robert Hoatson, an angry ex-priest, says the reforms are “too little, too late.” They always are, aren’t they?

Mitchell Garabedian, who spends his life suing and condemning priests—including those found not guilty—charges that the Church is continuing “the secrecy which has enabled the clergy sexual abuse to exist.” What secrets the Church is keeping he does not say, nor will anyone in the media ask him to unmask these “secrets.”

Peter Isely, a professional victims’ advocate, complains that the “new law leaves it up to the bishop to report it to civil authorities.” Does he know of a single institution, secular or religious, which outsources its authority to police internal instances of sexual misconduct?

Zach Hiner is a new guy on the scene. He represents the moribund entity called SNAP, which has been riddled with corruption. He is more explicit than Isely. He wants a rule “mandating priests and nuns report everything to outside, secular authorities.” He basically wants a state takeover of the Church—he should have the guts to say so.

Kudos to Pope Francis for his leadership on this issue. Most practicing Catholics are reasonable. They are likely to applaud these measures. That is what matters most.

SETH MEYERS LIVES IN A BUBBLE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Seth Meyers’ latest attack on the Catholic Church:

In his NBC-TV show last night, Seth Meyers told viewers that “Pope Francis has announced new rules designed to change how

the Catholic Church deals with abuse accusations, and not 2,000 years too soon.”

This guy lives in a bubble. There is no town or city in America that houses more sexual predators per square inch than Hollywood, yet late-night talk show hosts rarely take shots at their own home-grown molesters.

Just today Steven Spielberg is in the news for pulling out of the CBS show “Bull” because the network had to dish out \$9.5 million in a settlement regarding the sexual harassment of actress Eliza Dushku; she was fired after she confronted the star of the show, Michael Weatherly.

This is the way they still do business in Hollywood. Unlike the Catholic Church, which is instituting new reforms to combat sexual misconduct, Hollywood is still writing checks to victims, allowing offenders like Weatherly to keep his job. Why is he still working for CBS?

Don’t look for Meyers to say anything about this, or about the serial problems that NBC has had over the years with its own perverts.

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