

SNAP CRASHES; LEADERS QUIT IN DISGRACE

The two top leaders of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), David Clohessy and Barbara Blaine, quit over the winter, exiting in disgrace. The Catholic League pursued them for decades, offering proof of what a bigoted, lying, scheming fraud they are.

The final nail in the coffin was supplied by a former employee, Gretchen Rachel Hammond. A transgender person, Hammond sued SNAP for taking “kickbacks” from lawyers who represented persons referred by Clohessy and Blaine; the leaders even pressured those who won big money in their lawsuits to divvy up a portion to them. (See pp. 8-11 on this huge development.)

The first to bail was Clohessy, the executive director and face of SNAP; he announced his resignation at the end of January. Next to flee was Barbara Blaine, the founder and president; she threw the towel in at the beginning of February.

Both of them tried to put a happy face on their departure, but no one believes them. Clohessy said he “voluntarily resigned,” but this is an incomplete and dishonest account. Had it not been for a string of lawsuits and bad publicity, he would have stayed for years. Blaine echoed the same line, saying the lawsuit “had absolutely no bearing on my leaving.”

Clohessy listed “fatigue” as his reason for quitting, saying he wanted to do something “less stressful.” But what could be less stressful than rolling out of bed and answering the phone? After all, he didn’t report to work in Chicago, the venue of SNAP’s office; he elected to stay at home in St. Louis.

Speaking from the same playbook, Blaine said she left because “I need a break.” A break from what? Telling employees to ignore callers asking for help? That’s what Hammond alleges.

Clohessy and Blaine have shamelessly attacked the Catholic Church for decades, posing as crusaders for justice. All of this and more can be found on the Catholic League website: we have documented the lies and machinations of SNAP for a long time, though the mainstream media have been reluctant to acknowledge it.

The great irony is that after working so incestuously with several unseemly lawyers, not one of them has volunteered to represent SNAP. Barbara Dorris, who now calls herself the managing director, said they are “seeking pro-bono legal help.” One can hardly blame their lawyer buddies for running—they know SNAP is finished, so they have no reason to help.

It is so gratifying to see that justice is finally being done. And this isn’t over—they still have to face the music in court.

THREE HEROES PASS AWAY

We lost three good men in January: Father Michael Scanlon and Nat Hentoff died on January 7, and Steven McDonald passed away three days later. Bill Donohue knew them all and offers the following remarks.

“Father Scanlon will be remembered for saving the College of Steubenville, turning it into the Franciscan University of Steubenville, a citadel of Catholic higher education. The renaming in 1985 was not a nominal change: Father Scanlon put

the school on the map, making it a home for serious Catholic scholars.

“The Catholic League has had no better cheerleader over the years than Nat Hentoff, the prominent jazz critic. An atheist left-wing Jewish writer, he was not the kind of person normally drawn to us. But he was courageously pro-life. For strongly opposing abortion, he was booted from the board of directors of the ACLU and dumped from liberal newspapers as a columnist.

“Steve McDonald is a New York icon, a police officer who was mindlessly shot in Central Park in 1986, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down. A Catholic League member, he was confined to a wheelchair, using a tracheal to breathe. He is most known for his public statements on the need to forgive, a reflection on his own need to forgive his offender.

“It is doubtful these men knew each other; they would have gotten along well. They left their mark on my life, and I am grateful they did.”

POLITICIZING THE CULTURE

William A Donohue

Politics is everywhere, and it's getting out of control.

We now have the likes of LeBron James and Serena Williams, two talented athletes, publicly taking up the cause of Black Lives Matter, a racist band of activists. We also have the likes of Colin Kaepernick and Joakim Noah, two talentless athletes (Kaepernick's 49ers won two games this past season and Noah is averaging two points a game for the Knicks) protesting the

National Anthem and the Army, respectively.

Hollywood has a long history of politicizing the culture. From the Hollywood Ten—all were card-carrying members of the Communist Party—to Meryl Streep and her screed against the president, Tinseltown has been a political circus for decades. Nowadays it is routine for actors, singers, and musicians to offer their wisdom on the latest person or event that bothers them.

The newest entry into the politicization of the culture is corporate America. Led by Goldman Sachs, the big business boys and girls are literally in love with the radical gay movement. Microsoft, Google, and Amazon are politically absorbed on many issues, and standing up right behind them is an array of smaller companies. Macy's and Nordstrom's are hopelessly political, setting an example for small stores.

We couldn't even watch the Super Bowl without being treated to one political ad after another. Subtle statements about how racist and sexist America is were highlighted throughout the game. Even a company that makes lumber couldn't limit itself to selling wood.

There is one thing these individuals and institutions have in common: every one of them promotes the politics of the Left.

Conservative athletes and actors keep their politics to themselves and do what we expect them to do: play and act. Similarly, conservatives in the corporate world keep their distance from politics, sticking to business interests. Not so with their left-wing colleagues.

There is something else that these athletes, actors, and corporate officers have in common: they are all super rich. How does that explain their politics? Just like the intellectuals who spoon-feed them their politics, none of them are forced to live with the consequences of their ideas.

They can complain about stop-and-frisk police policies because they don't live in high crime areas. They can oppose school choice and avoid lousy public schools because they can afford to send their children to private schools. They can promote gun control because their bodyguards are already armed. They can rail about carbon footprints because they can't see theirs from their private plane. They can support a hands-off homeless policy because they don't have to see men defecating in the street on their way to work.

Worse than their hypocrisy is what these elites are doing to our society.

By politicizing the culture, the high flyers are dividing America.

When we go to a ballgame, we expect to witness athletic excellence. We also come together to root for our team, showing the players how much we appreciate their efforts. As fans, we may be of different races, ethnic groups, religions, and classes—and we may have a different set of political beliefs—but what brings us together is the game.

Politics undoes that. When a player refuses to stand during the National Anthem, he sends a divisive political message. The same is true when we go to a concert and have to listen to a singer shout his politics from the microphone. These celebrities not only abuse their platform—no one came to hear their political inanities—they pit one American against another.

The advent of corporate America entering the political fray is most disturbing. Many people think that because the Republican Party has the reputation of catering to the rich that the financial and corporate sectors are in the pocket of Republicans, promoting their candidates and policies. Not the big ones: in the last election, Wall Street and Madison Avenue put their chips on Hillary Clinton.

The big corporations may tout the virtues of a market economy, but in reality they loathe competition, which is why they favor the regulatory schemes of the Democrats: it keeps new entrepreneurs from competing against them.

It would not help matters if conservative athletes, actors, and corporate officials became more political. The answer is not to even things up by escalating a new wave of politicization; rather, the answer is to depoliticize the culture.

This is not a call for passivity. Letting athletes and actors know how we feel about their abuse of power is critical. We also need to take our business elsewhere when confronted by corporations that get too political. Our side did that well by patronizing Chick-fil-A after left-wing activists sought to crush it because its founder espoused traditional values (he is a practicing Christian).

The elites occupy the command posts but we outnumber them. We need to flex our muscles and tell them to get off their soapbox. Laura Ingraham got it right when she named a book on this subject, *Shut Up and Sing*. We can now add “Shut Up and Play Ball,” and “Shut Up and Sell.”

SNAP IMPLODES

Bill Donohue

The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) has been sued before, and while it has been hurt by those filings, the latest one suggests the end is near. It can't come too soon.

The Catholic League has been tracking SNAP for years. From news releases to radio and TV interviews, we have kept the media abreast of just how corrupt the outfit is. We've sent people undercover to attend its public conferences; we've taken out ads in major newspapers; we've issued several lengthy reports; we've fielded complaints from its clients; and we've consulted with bishops and others. SNAP is a fraud.

The lawsuit by a former employee, Gretchen Rachel Hammond, registers several serious accusations against SNAP, all of which are supported by the Catholic League's own investigations of the group. The two together—an eyewitness account and our research—wholly discredit its reputation and completely disarm its supporters, namely, those in the mainstream media.

Hammond has sued David Clohessy, the executive director, Barbara Blaine, founder and president, and outreach director Barbara Dorris; the case is before the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Hammond, a transgender person, worked for SNAP as its director of development between mid-2011 and early 2013. In that capacity, Hammond learned the truth about SNAP, and has now unloaded with the details.

Not surprisingly, after confronting SNAP officials about its ethically offensive and legally suspect work, Hammond was subject to retaliatory action. Consequently, the plaintiff suffered from stress and depression, resulting in health problems. Hammond is suing for a loss of wages as well. The lawsuit closes with a grave indictment: "SNAP acted willfully with actual malice, including a wanton disregard for the rights of others such that an award of punitive damages is appropriate."

Hammond uncovered a whole lot, all of which will be discussed. Most seriously, the lawsuit says that "SNAP routinely accepts financial kickbacks from attorneys in the form of 'donations,'" and in return SNAP "refers survivors as

potential clients to attorneys, who then file lawsuits on behalf of the survivors against the Catholic Church. These cases often settle to the financial benefit of the attorneys and, at times, to the financial health of SNAP, which has received direct payments from survivors' settlements."

Anti-Catholicism Drives SNAP

Before addressing the legal issues involved, it is important to understand what makes SNAP tick. Hammond learned first-hand what the Catholic League has been saying for decades: SNAP is driven by a pathological hatred of the Catholic Church, not a concern for the welfare of victims.

"While SNAP claims that it is motivated by the interests of survivors, in fact," the lawsuit says, "SNAP is motivated largely by the personal animus of its directors and officers against the Catholic Church."

For example, Clohessy recommended that an alleged victim pursue a claim against the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, saying that every nickel it doesn't have is money that can't be spent on "defense lawyers, PR staff, gay-bashing, women-hating, contraceptive-battling, etc." He then offered to refer the person to one of his lawyer friends.

The Catholic League is in an even better position than Hammond to identify SNAP's hatred of the Catholic Church.

On July 8-10, 2011 SNAP held a national conference, open to the public, near the airport in Washington, D.C. There were approximately 110-130 people in attendance, all white, mostly female, aged 40-75 (mostly seniors or near seniors). They came from only a few states.

We know this, and much more, because I paid for two persons to attend the conference and report back. I subsequently published the findings online in a report, "SNAP EXPOSED: *Unmasking the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests.*"

Copies were sent to all the bishops.

Here is how one of our confederates summed up his experience. "The recurring theme of the conference was the evil nature of the Catholic Church. The word 'evil' was used repeatedly to describe 'the institution.' There was no presumption of innocence: accused priests were spoken of as if they were guilty, and this was true of all the speakers, including the attorneys."

It was no surprise that Jeffrey Anderson was one of the speakers. No one has ripped off the Catholic Church more than this diminutive lawyer from Minnesota. A former hippie and recovering alcoholic, in one settlement alone he netted half a billion dollars. He once described himself as a "dedicated atheist." His goal, he plainly admits, is to "sue the s*** out of them [the Catholic Church]." His hatred runs deep: He has sued the Vatican on several occasions, trying to hold the pope responsible for priestly misconduct from Boston to Bombay. He has never won.

Father Thomas Doyle, a Dominican, is another recovering alcoholic who has big problems with the Catholic Church. He blasted the Church for promoting "fear, power, and guilt," saying that Constantine, not Jesus Christ, founded the Church.

Another speaker, Terence McKiernan, founder and president of BishopAccountability, told the small gathering of Catholic haters that he would like to "stick it to" New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan. He also accused him of "keeping the lid on 55 names" of predator priests. On several occasions, I personally asked McKiernan to provide me with his list of names, but he never responds. It's a lie, and he knows it.

Richard Sipe, a former Benedictine monk, told the seniors, "The Church is corrupt," and proceeded to make many unsupported accusations. He knew no one would challenge him because they all came to hear horror stories.

It would be a serious mistake to assume that this is just venting, idle banter coming from some malcontents. No, this is the mindset that drives SNAP to plunder the rights of priests. Take SNAP president Barbara Blaine. She has justified raids made by Belgian police on Catholic churches, and is adamant in her conviction, expressed at the conference, that while accused priests may have a legal right to countersue, they have no moral right to do so.

Clohessy was once asked about the rights of priests, and when pressed about what he means by pursuing “credibly accused” priests, he could not provide a clear answer, saying only that “there’s all kinds of criteria” determining what that means. In practice, SNAP makes no distinction between an accusation and one that has been substantiated.

The contempt that SNAP has for the rights of priests is bad enough, but it pales in significance compared to its own conspiratorial savaging of innocent priests. Take the case of Father Joseph Jiang. SNAP accused him of sexually abusing minors.

SNAP said it knew who the victims were, but when pressed it could not name a single person. When ordered by a federal court to provide evidence, it refused to do so, resulting in sanctions. This was one reason why U.S. District Court Judge Carol E. Jackson accused SNAP of defaming Father Jiang. The Hammond lawsuit was right to seize on the judge’s ruling.

The court declared that “it has been established that the SNAP defendants conspired with one another and others to obtain plaintiff’s conviction on sexual abuse charges and that they entered into this conspiracy due to discriminatory animus against plaintiff based on his religion, religious vocation, race and national origin.” Moreover, the court ruled that “the SNAP defendants’ public statements about plaintiff were false and that they did not conduct any inquiry into the truth or falsity of these public statements, but instead made these

statements negligently and with reckless disregard for the truth.”

That’s quite an indictment. SNAP officials conspired to make false charges against an innocent priest and did so because they hate the Catholic Church.

What makes this even more sickening is the fact that when SNAP learns of real sexual abuse, it does nothing about it. To be specific, David Clohessy is quick to condemn bishops for not reporting suspected priests, yet he never called the cops in the 1990s on his priest brother, Kevin, after learning that he abused a minor.

Kickbacks

Hammond’s lawsuit lists one “donation” after another being made by plaintiff attorneys to SNAP. These SNAP-greasing lawyers make up the lion’s share of funds collected by Clohessy and company in any given year. For example, in 2008, “a Minnesota lawyer” contributed 55 percent—\$414,140—of SNAP’s total donations for the year; three years later he contributed over 40 percent of total revenue. The lawyers, of course, love to write SNAP a check because that’s how they get many of their clients.

SNAP is so thoroughly corrupt that it has even laundered money to itself via dummy organizations. “Tellingly, at one time during 2011 and 2012,” the lawsuit says, “SNAP even concocted a scheme to have attorneys make donations to a front foundation, styled the ‘Minnesota Center for Philanthropy,’ and then have the Minnesota Center for Philanthropy make a grant to SNAP in order to provide a subterfuge for, and to otherwise conceal, the plaintiff’s attorneys’ kickbacks to SNAP.”

Keep in mind that this is just what we know from the short time Hammond was working there. God only knows how many other rip-off schemes SNAP has been involved in over the years.

When Clohessy was deposed in 2012, in a case involving a priest in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, he was asked to disclose his source of funding. He refused. When asked specifically about monies SNAP receives from lawyers, he once again refused to answer. What really set him off was the question, "Does SNAP have any agreements with attorneys regarding referral of victims to those attorneys?" He never answered the question, saying only that he was "offended" by it.

At the 2011 SNAP conference, Anderson shamelessly conducted a fundraising appeal on the spot, matching dollar for dollar any donation made by an attendee. But he made it clear he would not match a \$10,000 donation by fellow attorney Jeffrey Herman. All total, \$30,000 was raised. So if Herman gave \$10,000, and Anderson matched all donations save for Herman's contribution, that means the attendees dished out \$10,000. In other words, two steeple-chasing attorneys accounted for two-thirds of all the money raised. Without their input, SNAP would have folded years ago.

Corruption Abounds

SNAP's unseemly relationship with lawyers is not confined to funding. For example, according to the lawsuit, it "regularly communicates with attorneys about their lawsuits on behalf of survivors, receiving drafts of pleadings and other privileged information. The attorneys and SNAP work together in developing the legal theories and strategies of survivors' lawsuits." It's what they do with this information that matters most. "Attorneys and SNAP base their strategy not on the best interests of the survivor, but on what will generate the most publicity and fundraising opportunities for SNAP." Hammond's account raises serious ethical and legal questions about the way SNAP operates. Attorneys would give Clohessy, Blaine, and Dorris "drafts of complaints and other pleadings prior to filing, along with other privileged information," and then they would "use those drafts to generate sensational

press releases on the survivors' lawsuits." Not surprisingly, they would then issue "press releases to media outlets and schedule a press conference on the day a survivors' lawsuit was filed."

What the lawsuit does not say is how this game is played to the disadvantage of the diocese being sued. For instance, after Clohessy completes his press conference speaking about a leaked lawsuit, the media ask the local bishop and his attorneys to comment. Of course, they cannot say anything about a lawsuit they have not seen. This is exactly the point: the Church is made to look bad.

Hammond's account is further validated by considering what Clohessy said under oath when deposed in 2012. He was asked about a lawsuit that was filed at 2:44 p.m. on October 20, 2011. How could he have had this information before it was filed in court? He used it as the basis of a press conference, blindsiding the Church in the process. Clohessy refused to answer the question.

In another case, a lawsuit had a file stamp of November 8, 2011 at 1:28 p.m. Again, Clohessy was able to post information about this before it was filed with the court. When asked to explain himself, he refused. He is a master of deceit.

Hammond shows how SNAP officials were more concerned about raking in the dough than in serving the interests of their clients. The lawsuit cites an email exchange between SNAP officials discussing a subpoena that was issued to them. The contents reveal much about their character.

One of them asked if they should mention the subpoena in their newsletter. It "may prompt more donations," the missive said, even though "on the other hand, it'll also upset more survivors...." Blaine's answer was vintage SNAP: "My initial response is that we err on the side of using it to raise money."

There it is in black and white: in a conflict between obtaining money and protecting survivors, take the cash and run. One of Blaine's colleagues agreed. What came next is priceless. An unidentified employee chimed in, cautioning everyone to be careful "what we put in e-mails, ok?" Too late for that.

The lawsuit also shows how Clohessy relies on attorneys to intimidate his critics. When a Kansas City blogger raised serious questions about the way lawyers grease SNAP, and how SNAP officials ask their clients to share some of the money they've won in a lawsuit, Clohessy asked an attorney involved in the case to reply. He said that if the writer were to get a letter from a lawyer, out of "fear" he may become "more temperate in his comments in the future." In other words, let's see if we can silence the critic by intimidating him.

What does SNAP do with its money? The officials know how to have a good time. When traveling to The Hague in 2011 to file a lawsuit against Pope Benedict in the International Criminal Court (it went nowhere), they "used the funds raised by Plaintiff to pay for lavish hotels and other extravagant travel expenses for its leadership." Not only that, but "SNAP also uses funds meant to assist survivors on its own legal troubles."

SNAP is not an organization the way the Catholic League is. We have a staff that goes to work Monday thru Friday, reporting to our office in New York City. Not SNAP. When Clohessy was deposed, he testified that SNAP has a business address in Chicago. Who works there is a mystery. He didn't even know the zip code. He works out of his home, but it is not near the Chicago office. It's in the St. Louis area.

What does Clohessy do for a living? He said he fields phone calls from strangers who "share their pain" with him. So what does he do about their pain? "I console them and I may be on the phone with them for an hour." He said he doesn't charge a

fee. So generous of him.

Declaring one's home a place of business raises legal questions. Clohessy was asked whether "at your house do you have an occupational license or a business license to do business out of your house?" He simply said, "No."

Under oath, Clohessy was asked if SNAP gives a portion of its funds to charity, as required by law. He replied, "I'm not aware of that." So what does SNAP do with its money? It was revealed that in 2007 it spent a total of \$593 on "survivor support." That was it. The following year it spent \$92,000 on travel. This is quite a racket.

How SNAP Exploits Survivors

On the first page of Hammond's lawsuit, it says "SNAP does not focus on protecting or helping survivors—it exploits them."

SNAP, the lawsuit says, "callously disregards the real interests of survivors, using them instead as props and tools in furtherance of SNAP's own commercial fundraising goals. Instead of recommending that survivors pursue what is in their best personal, emotional, and financial interests, SNAP pressures survivors to pursue costly and stressful litigation against the Catholic Church, all in order to further SNAP's own publicity and fundraising interests."

The media would have us believe that SNAP is a caring, survivor outreach organization in pursuit of justice. It is anything but.

If SNAP really cared about the victims of sexual abuse, it would employ professional counselors to deal with them. But as the lawsuit says, it "did not have a single grief counselor or rape counselor on its payroll." Moreover, it "never reached out to, or communicated with, grief counselors or rape counselors for the purpose of providing counseling to survivors through SNAP's network."

Worse, SNAP “would even ignore survivors who reached out to them.” When Dorris was told about phone calls from aggrieved parties—persons who shared their traumatic experiences—she told Hammond “to simply not answer phone calls from survivors seeking assistance and counseling.” In other words, just blow them off.

There is one Louisiana psychiatrist who did work for SNAP, Dr. Steve Taylor, but in 2011 he was sentenced to prison. His offense? Possession of child pornography. SNAP defended him! In fact, Blaine wrote to the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners pleading with them to cut Taylor some slack. And they have the nerve to pretend that they care about child sexual abuse.

SNAP claims to be a rape crisis center, but it is a lie. The lawsuit correctly references Clohessy’s deposition, citing how the court labeled as “meritless” SNAP’s assertion that it is a rape crisis center.

Clohessy told the court that he didn’t have to comply with a request for internal documents, nor did he have to answer any questions. He cited Missouri law which protects the confidentiality of rape crisis centers. But when asked, point blank, “Did you identify yourself as a rape crisis center?”, he said, “I don’t know.” At a later point, he admitted, “I don’t know under the Missouri statutes exactly what constitutes a rape crisis center.”

Clohessy was asked about his training as a rape crisis center counselor. He admitted that he had no formal education or training in that area. In fact, he is not a licensed counselor, and even admitted he has never taken formal classes in counseling sexual abuse victims. [He has a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and political science.] Yet his lack of expertise did not stop him from falsely presenting himself as a counselor. In fact, no one at SNAP has ever been a licensed counselor.

When Clohessy was asked where his “counseling” sessions took place, he said, “We meet people wherever they want to meet, in Starbucks, at, you know—wherever people feel comfortable, that’s where we meet.” What do they do? He admitted that “the overwhelming bulk of our work is talking to, listening to, supporting sex abuse victims.” He did not say who paid for the coffee in these “clinical” settings.

How SNAP Exploits the Media

The lawsuit charges that SNAP “manipulates and exploits media publicity surrounding survivors’ lawsuits against the church to raise its own publicity and drive fundraising efforts.” In a case involving Father Michael Tierney, et al., the trial judge issued a gag order after SNAP made statements that “seriously jeopardize [the priest’s] ability to receive a fair trial in this case.” That gag order was then violated, leading to a very telling exchange.

Clohessy was put on the spot. “Has SNAP to your knowledge ever issued a press release that contained false information?” He didn’t blink. “Sure.”

Not only does SNAP lie to the media, it has a blueprint for doing so. At the conference, Clohessy gave some tips on how to sucker the media and stick it to the Church. Attendees were instructed that the best way to get the media’s attention is to hold press conferences outside a chancery. That way when the event is over, reporters can quickly seek an interview with some diocesan PR person.

What really works, the gathering was told, is to play on the emotions of reporters. “Display holy childhood photos!” What if no photos are available? “If you don’t have compelling holy childhood photos,” Clohessy said, “we can provide you with photos of other kids that can be held up for the camera.” It doesn’t matter whose kids are in the photo—what counts is that the media be seduced.

Clohessy also instructed attorneys to conduct interviews in front of the parish where the priest was assigned. Why? This is a good way to get clients and entice whistleblowers to come forward when they see the interview on TV.

It is important, Clohessy said, to use "feeling words." He offered some suggestions. "I was scared. I was suicidal." He counseled that it is better to come across as sad, not mad; doing so facilitates making an emotional connection with the audience. It was also critical to use the word "kids" as often as possible. That pulls at everyone's heart strings.

Conclusion

What we know about SNAP, and what is alleged, is startling.

- It accepts kickbacks from attorneys
- It is motivated by a pathological hatred of the Catholic Church
- It has no respect for the rights of accused priests
- It lies about priests
- It lies to survivors
- It lies to judges
- It lies to the media
- It seeks to intimidate and silence its critics
- It blindsides diocesan officials with leaked lawsuits
- It abuses donations
- It exploits survivors by offering unlicensed counseling services
- It spends practically nothing on servicing survivors
- It manipulates the media by staging events
- It retaliates against employees who question its operations

In short, SNAP officials function as borderline gangsters out to destroy innocent persons. It is motivated by hate and exploits the very people it claims to serve. Justice demands that it be shut down by the authorities before it does any

more harm.

MARCH FOR LIFE SCARES DEATH INDUSTRY

This year's March for Life took place at a time of unprecedented optimism. President Donald Trump's leadership has emboldened the Congress and state lawmakers to fight for the rights of the unborn with greater resolve than ever before. The death industry has taken note and is none too happy.

The death industry, led by Planned Parenthood and NARAL, had a major presence at the Women's March on Washington. Their idea of women's rights is fixated on abortion and lesbians (as well as those unsure what sex they are). Thus, they have little in common with most women.

President Trump recently appointed Judge Neil Gorsuch as a Supreme Court justice, a man who understands that the most pressing civil right of our time is the right to life. Trump has already signed an executive order reinstating the "Mexico City Policy"; it bans federal funding to international groups that perform abortions.

The House recently passed a bill introduced by Rep. Chris Smith ensuring that the Hyde Amendment, which bans federal abortion funding, will be made permanent, thus vitiating the need for annual reapproval; the bill now goes to the Senate for a vote. On January 12, Rep. Steve King introduced a House bill that would ban an abortion after the baby's heartbeat is detected.

In the states, lawmakers are geared up like never before. Last year, Louisiana passed seven new laws restricting abortion. Texas introduced 17 new civil rights laws protecting children in the womb, and 2017 will see at least some of them enacted.

Kentucky just passed two pro-life laws, one of which bans abortions after 20 weeks. In January, lawmakers in Florida, New Mexico and Tennessee introduced bills that would also ban abortions after 20 weeks; New Jersey filed a similar bill last year. Moreover, Missouri legislators refiled 14 pro-life bills in January. And Iowa is considering a bill to defund Planned Parenthood.

The death industry is scared. Pictures of babies in their mother's womb are becoming clearer all the time, convincing more Americans that abortion is the intentional taking of innocent human life. The clock is ticking, and the time is getting late to continue the delusion that abortion does not kill.

CATHOLIC FOES SPONSOR WOMEN'S D.C. MARCH

The Women's March on Washington was a misnomer: it included many who claim to be neither a man nor a woman, yet were born either male or female. It is also a misnomer to say, as organizers did, that the march was about uniting "our vibrant and diverse communities": it sought to divide, not unite.

Some critics called this an anti-Trump rally. They, too, are mistaken. It was a protest against the American people who voted for Donald Trump. In short, it was a protest against democracy.

As with all activist events, this one was guided by “isms.” The two principal ideological strains are libertinism and anti-Catholicism: the protesters want a sexual free-for-all (minus the lethal diseases), and they want to attack Catholicism for not affirming it.

The organizers said the event was being held to support “diverse religious faiths particularly Muslim.” Happy to know that Muslims are given priority over the Zoroastrians, though it is not certain whether any will march with the “LGBTQIA” contingency (“Q” stands for “Queer”; not sure who the “I” and “A” folks are).

Among the many sponsors of the march were the following organizations; a sample of their contributions to anti-Catholicism is included:

Amnesty International: In 2015, it sponsored an anti-Catholic video, laced with obscenities, attacking the Catholic Church in Ireland for its opposition to abortion.

Center for Reproductive Rights: In 2011, when the bishops opposed a bill promoting abortion, it fell back on an old anti-Catholic trope, accusing them of “enforcing religious dogma” on the American people.

Feminist Majority Foundation: In 2005, it opposed elevating Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court because that would mean too many Catholics on the bench.

Human Rights Campaign: It has consistently labeled every conflict between religious liberty and gay rights as an attack by the bishops on gays, not as an exercise of the First Amendment.

Human Rights Watch: It labels as “obstructionist” the right of the Holy See to oppose abortion laws, and has attacked Filipino bishops for merely stating the Church’s position on contraception and abortion.

MoveOn.org: Heavily funded by George Soros and his Open Society Foundations, it has supported virtually every phony, anti-Catholic “Catholic” group, such as Catholics for Choice and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good.

NARAL: Founded with the express purpose of lying about, and smearing, the Catholic Church, it continues to assault Catholicism whenever abortion is in the news.

National Organization for Women: Frequently accuses the bishops of a “War on Women” for simply voicing objections to abortion.

PEN: Ostensibly a “free speech” organization, it has condemned the free speech rights of Catholics (e.g. the Catholic League) for opposing anti-Catholic bigotry.

Planned Parenthood: Founded by an extreme anti-Catholic, Margaret Sanger, it has been fomenting anti-Catholicism for 100 years.

In addition to these 10 anti-Catholic sponsors, the Women’s March on Washington drew the support of activists who have nothing to do with women’s rights (e.g., Americans United for Separation of Church and State), but who are nonetheless long-time Catholic bashers. Hollywood was well represented, as is only fitting: the event celebrated reckless sex, and was heavily populated by Catholic haters.

ABORTION RATE DIPS TO NEW LOW

The Guttmacher Institute, a research firm that is squarely in the pro-abortion camp, released a new study, “Abortion Incidence and Service Availability in the United States,

2014," that is as interesting in its findings as it is in its interpretation of the data.

Its central finding is striking: The number of abortions has fallen to the lowest level since 1974, the year following *Roe v. Wade*.

"In 2014," it concludes, "an estimated 926,200 abortions were performed in the United States, 12% fewer than in 2011; the 2014 abortion rate was 14.6 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44, representing a 14% decline over this period." It also found that "The rates declined in almost all states." Regionally, the decline was steepest in the West and the South.

The data on the Northeast are particularly interesting. Not only was the decline less impressive than in the West and the South, but it was the only region that had more clinics performing abortions. Moreover, New York and New Jersey were among the five states with the highest abortion rates in the nation.

The District of Columbia deserves special mention. Access to abortion spiked there, and none of the 50 states had a higher abortion rate—D.C. is number one. The victims of abortion were overwhelmingly African American. This raises the question: Why is access to abortion increasing in an area that is largely poor and black? This is not an accident.

"Abortion restrictions were associated with a decrease in the number of abortions and nonspecialized clinics [e.g. Planned Parenthood]," but the study cautioned that there is no clear evidence that would allow for a cause and effect conclusion. That is true—fluctuations are evident—but it is also true that the data are suggestive of an association between restrictive abortion laws and a decline in abortion rates.

From a pro-life perspective, the historic decline in the number of abortions is encouraging. But what does it mean to

the pro-abortion industry? The perspective of the report's lead author, Rachel Jones, is telling. For her, a decline in abortion is not, per se, something to celebrate.

"If there are women in these highly restrictive states who want abortions but can't get them because there aren't any clinics that they can get to, and that's why abortion's going down, that's not a good thing," she said.

In other words, it is not the body count that matters, it's whether states have passed more restrictive laws on abortion access. Jones said it would be a "good story" if the abortion decline were due to fewer women "having unintended pregnancies."

Jones has gotten herself into another jam. She did not say why a decline in abortions—for any reason—would be good news. After all, if abortion does not result in the certain death of innocents, then what's so great about having fewer of them?

The study said that some of the decline in unintended pregnancies is due to contraceptives, and it offered some evidence for that position. What it did not mention is the possibility that women are less sexually active these days. In fact, they are.

Last year, a study published in the Archives of Sexual Behavior considered data collected as part of the General Social Survey; it focused on the answers of 26,707 adults to questions regarding sex and relationships. It found that millennials are a whole lot less sexually active than their parents were at the same age. The authors of the study explained this finding by saying that today's young people are a "very risk-averse generation."

Yes, fear of sexually transmitted diseases, as the researchers concluded, is real. But it is also true that young people today are much more likely to know that abortion results in sudden death. This is not due to sex ed. The credit goes to

technology: Pictures don't lie, and the pictures of life in the womb offer the most devastating evidence that life begins at conception.

The abortion industry is in trouble. It is losing money, and it is losing the support of youth. Look for brighter days ahead.

BIGOTRY AND BLOOD MARK PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Recently, a short film called "100 Years," was released to celebrate the centenary of Planned Parenthood.

Lena Dunham was a great choice to co-produce this Planned Parent-hood propaganda film. She is not only a confessed child abuser, she recently regretted not having an abortion. Having Meryl Streep do some of the narrating was also wise. When she was a freshman at Yale, she took an acting class where she was asked to act out a death scene: she chose to perform an abortion on herself.

The founder of Planned Parent-hood, Margaret Sanger, was both a racist and an anti-Catholic. Indeed, she was so extreme in her hatred of African Americans and Catholics that what she said was indistinguishable from the rants of the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

Dunham was correct to note that "eugenics was an immensely popular social movement." Yes, it was very popular in Nazi Germany. What she failed to note is that the Catholic Church was almost alone on the world stage at the time opposing eugenics.

Sanger was also a classic anti-Catholic. When New York Governor Al Smith ran for president in 1928, Sanger's journal warned of "tyrannical intolerance and usurpation of power exercised by office-holders born and bred in the Roman Catholic faith." She even went so far as to say that no Catholic "has any moral right to hold a position of authority for the State."

Margaret Sanger wore her bigotry on her sleeve, but at least it wasn't dripping with blood. She opposed abortion; it was her successors who took up this cause.

Planned Parenthood was born in bigotry, and later bathed in blood, which explains why its leaders are Hollywood's heroes.

CHRISTIAN REFUGEES MERIT PRIORITY STATUS

The following article written by Bill Donohue was recently featured on CNSNews.com.

In November 2015, President Barack Obama told a G20 press conference that proposals to give priority status to Christian refugees from Syria were "shameful." He said, "We do not have a religious test for our compassion." He recently criticized President Donald Trump for making good on this initiative.

What is really shameful is Obama's hypocrisy, and that of his supporters. According to the logic of Trump's critics, Obama employed a religious test to keep Syrian Christian refugees out of the United States, something that Trump is now seeking to rectify. Moreover, those refugees were created, in large part, by Obama's failed Middle East policy.

Obama's policy of giving priority status to Muslims was so blatant that it caught the attention of U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Daniel Manion.

In November, he voiced concern over the almost complete absence of Christians among the Syrian refugees. He noted that "of the nearly 11,000 refugees admitted by mid-September, only 56 were Christian."

He further observed that "Perhaps 10 percent of the population of Syria is Christian, and yet less than one-half of one percent of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States this year are Christian."

It is not persuasive to say that Obama did not explicitly employ a religious test against Christians. His defenders cannot have it both ways. If Obama didn't have a religious test, then neither does Trump—there is no "Muslim ban."

Trump's executive order was written to stop refugees from Syria and six other Muslim-run nations—it did not single out Muslims. And if it were a "Muslim ban," then all nations that are predominantly Muslim would have been named, but they were not.

Should Christian refugees be given priority status? Absolutely. There is one overriding reason: they are the most persecuted people on earth.

It is not compassionate to treat every religion equally when the distribution of the victims of religious persecution, and the reasons for it, are so egregiously unequal. Millions of Christians were murdered under Hitler, but they were not targeted for genocide the way 6 million Jews were. That makes a difference.

An Italian research institute, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, recently released a report on Christian persecution worldwide finding that 90,000 Christians were

killed in 2016. It concluded that this means one Christian is killed every six minutes.

Open Doors, the world's largest outreach organization to persecuted Christians, found that aside from North Korea, it was in Muslim-run nations where Christians were most likely to be victimized. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan [note the name] killed more Christians because of their faith in 2016 than any other country.

The U.S. State Department's Commission on International Religious Freedom recorded in its 2016 annual report that "More people are on death row or serving life sentences for blasphemy in Pakistan than in any other country in the world." It detailed the violence of Muslim-run nations against Christians.

Political scientist Abraham Miller has noted that the State Department still uses an antiquated calculation when assessing the victims of persecution: it limits its study to state oppression, wholly ignoring terrorist entities such as ISIS. This means, he said, that "their brutal persecution of Christians does not give Christians special consideration as refugees."

Miller also pointed out that U.N. refugee camps are dominated by Muslims, many of whom brutalize Christians. "In the refugee camp in Jordan," he said, "there are no Christians. In the camps Christians are murdered, raped, and even kidnapped and sold into slavery."

Pew Research Center cited a survey from October where it found that the majority of Americans believe the U.S. does not have a responsibility to accept refugees from Syria. Of course, decisions on such an important humanitarian subject cannot be guided by polls alone—moral issues demand presidential leadership.

No matter, the survey results should temper those who are now

claiming that President Trump has opened Pandora's box; he is doing what the people want. Moreover, that box was opened by Obama when he gave preferential treatment to Muslim refugees, victims who were themselves victimized by his disastrous foreign policy decisions.

Trump's corrective is in direct response to these realities.

GORSUCH IS A GREAT PICK

President Trump recently selected Judge Neil Gorsuch to take Judge Antonin Scalia's place on the Supreme Court.

The Catholic League has a narrow focus when it comes to prospective U.S. Supreme Court judges.

We want someone who is intellectually admired by his colleagues, a person who has a well developed jurisprudential philosophy. We want someone who resists imputing his own political preferences when ruling on constitutional cases, and who instead interprets the law the way the Framers intended it to be understood.

Regarding the issues, we want someone who puts a premium on our two most important rights: the right to life, from fertilization to natural death, and religious liberty for all.

Judge Neil Gorsuch fits that description. He has a towering intellectual reputation, having studied at Columbia, Harvard, and Oxford. He is not an ideologue bent on affirming his politics in law. He is a judge who understands the dangers that assisted suicide and euthanasia pose to the most vulnerable members of society. He is a man who values religious liberty, holding that conscience rights are

paramount.

President Trump has selected an incredibly gifted person for the Supreme Court. The Senate deserves to give him a fair hearing, acting without delay.