

TOO MUCH RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?

When William Donohue learned that the New York State Legislature was considering a bill that would mandate all employers to provide contraceptive health insurance coverage for its employees, he personally wrote to every member arguing that a religious conscience protection clause be included. Catholic health care organizations, he said, should have the right to opt out of any mandated contraceptive and infertility coverage.

Donohue made the point that “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*.”

Donohue was most upset with a remark by Sheldon Silver, the Assembly Speaker. Silver said that a religious conscience exemption would be “taking religious freedom a little too far.” Donohue asked Silver to explain to Roman Catholics “why he thinks their rights are being pushed too far.”

We await a decision by the legislature.