WESTCHESTER POLS VIOLATE CHURCH-STATE LINES

New York Medical College, a Catholic institution located in Westchester, has decided to ban gay groups. It is being criticized by some public officials for doing so, including county executive Andrew J. Spano. Moreover, the Westchester Human Rights Commission has launched an investigation of this matter, and gay civil-rights groups are charging that the ban jeopardizes the school's accreditation status.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

"If the Archdiocese of New York were trying to whip a public college like CUNY into line, mandating that it follow the precepts of the Catholic Church, the same people who are now trying to force New York Medical College to abide by government strictures would be accusing the archdiocese of violating the principle of separation of church and state.

"From top to bottom, this issue is driven by politics, and not any alleged interest in fidelity to the law. The Human Rights Commission exists to investigate allegations of discrimination brought by individuals who claim that a federal, state or local law has been violated. Yet it is proceeding against New York Medical College even though a) there have been no formal complaints and b) the school has been affiliated with the Archdiocese of New York for more than a quarter century.

"Andrew J. Spano says it's 'news to me' that the college is a religious institution. Perhaps he should access the college's website. There he would learn that in 1978 Terence Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of New York, helped New York Medical College to restructure its debt and strengthen its Board of Trustees; he also added many Catholic hospitals to its affiliations.

And in 1986, the school adopted a formal statement strengthening its relationship with the archdiocese; this explains why the college is listed in the official directory of the archdiocese.

"It's time for Spano and his ideological kin at the Human Rights Commission to call off their dogs before they become the issue."