

# WHAT IF REP. WEINER WERE REV. WEINER?

Priests who engage in lewd conversations with teenagers are suspended from ministry for committing a “boundary violation,” and are charged with sexual abuse. But disgraced Rep. Anthony Weiner can send pornographic pictures of himself to young girls and he is free as a bird. Indeed, prior to his resignation, the majority of New Yorkers said that he should not resign.

Joe Garofoli of the *San Francisco Chronicle* said Weiner’s “biggest sin may not have been sexual”—it was “lying.” Former Democratic National Committee Chairman Tim Kaine said that “Lying is unforgivable,” but had no comment on the sexual offenses. Joan Walsh of Salon confessed that “The lying is what disturbs me.” S.E. Cupp’s article in the *New York Daily News* was flagged, “The disgraced congressman should resign, but immorality has nothing to do with it.” Similarly, Leslie Savan of the *Nation* wondered, “How can you be so stupid?”

Ilene Angel of the Huffington Post opined, “I honestly don’t care” what Weiner did. Glenn Greenwald of Salon chalked it all up to “voyeuristic fun.” Conor Friedersdorf in the *Atlantic* contended that we, the people, are the problem: we spend too much time “focusing on the sexual behavior of egocentric alpha males who spend a lot of time traveling far from home.” In a *Time* interview, Erica Jong not only gave Weiner a pass, she exculpated Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Rep. Chris Lee, Arnold Schwarzenegger, John Edwards and Eliot Spitzer: they all suffer from “a form of mental illness.”

To top things off, Joy Behar believed that “Somebody is out to get him, apparently ‘cause they don’t like his politics.” Weiner agreed: he told a donor that this was all due to a “vast right-wing conspiracy.”

In other words, if the guilty party were Rev. Weiner, he would have been sanctioned by the Church's "zero tolerance" policy. As usual, it wasn't the offense that mattered—it was the status of the offender.