

WHAT IF REP. WEINER WERE REV. WEINER?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

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

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

Ilene Angel of the Huffington Post opines, “I honestly don’t care” what Weiner did. Glenn Greenwald of Salon chalks it all up to “voyeuristic fun.” Conor Friedersdorf in the *Atlantic* contends 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 gives Weiner a pass, she exculpates Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rep. Chris Lee, John Edwards and Eliot Spitzer: they all suffer from “a form of mental illness.”

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

In other words, if the guilty party were Rev. Weiner, he would

be sanctioned by the Catholic Church's "zero tolerance" policy. But because he is Rep. Weiner, there are no penalties. As usual, it's not the offense that matters—it's the status of the offender.