



Connecticut Church Rallies Against Bill 1098

Thousands gather to protest attack on religious freedom

The Connecticut legislation that proposed to strip administrative authority from Catholic priests and bishops awoke a “sleeping giant” in response — namely, the state’s Catholic population.

Knights and their families were among a crowd of more than 5,000 Catholics and others concerned for religious freedom gathered at the State Capitol on Wednesday, March 11. The rally was organized with little notice and took place on what would have been the day of Bill 1098’s public hearing in the General Assembly’s Judiciary Committee.

The previous day, Rep. Michael Lawlor and Sen. Andrew McDonald, the two lawmakers who introduced Bill 1098, suddenly tabled it, following a week of outcry that the bill violated the First Amendment. The bill singled out the Catholic Church, seeking to turn over administrative authority to a series of elected lay boards. Although the bill is no longer scheduled for a hearing, it will likely be discussed again after the legislative session ends.

Bishops from the state’s three dioceses, along with speakers that included Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, addressed those gathered



Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson was among those who spoke to a crowd of more than 5,000 at the Connecticut State Capitol on March 11.

for the rally. The speakers forcefully stated that Bill 1098 should never

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NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Knights sponsor national summit on promoting volunteerism

Representatives from many of the nation’s largest volunteer organizations gathered Feb. 27 in New York City to plan an unprecedented volunteer response to the economic crisis.

More than 185 participants from approximately 115 charitable, religious, corporate, government, media and educational institutions attended the summit, which was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and Fairfield University’s Center for Faith and Public Life. Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson announced the event, titled “A Nation of Neighbors Helping Neighbors: A Summit on Volunteerism as a Response to the Economic Crisis,” during a Jan. 23 speech at Fairfield University.

Summit attendees included representatives from Habitat for Humanity, the United Way, the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, the National Fraternal Congress, General Electric, Volunteers of America and many other organizations from as far away as California and Texas.

“This crisis is unprecedented in our lifetimes, and our response must be as well.”

“The response — on such short notice — by so many of our nation’s top volunteer-promoting organizations shows just how much need



Supreme Chaplain Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., was among numerous panelists at the Feb. 27 summit on volunteerism. Also pictured are Susan Kohn (center), representing the United Jewish Appeal Federation of New York, and Laura Balun, director of voluntary service for the Veterans Administration.

there is for a personal response to the economic crisis,” said Anderson following the summit. “No solution

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have been raised, that it smacked of anti-Catholic sentiment and that the Catholic Church in Connecticut strongly supports the bishops and priests who were threatened by the legislation.

Despite a persistent drizzle and the cancellation of the hearing, thousands of Catholics from throughout the state came to Hartford to make their voices heard. Many arrived early and remained upbeat, often interrupting the speakers with cheers of support.

Bishop Michael R. Cote of Norwich, Conn., opened the rally with an invocation in thanks of religion freedom and for the U.S. Constitution. He then criticized those who championed Bill 1098, saying they had to be either ignorant

Bill 1098 was "not only constitutionally wrong, but absolutely unnecessary."

of its full implications "or openly antagonistic to the Church."

Supreme Knight Anderson called the bill "an insult to every priest in the state of Connecticut."

"We are here today to say that our priests and bishops should be treated with respect," he added.

Supreme Chaplain Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport said that Bill 1098 is also an attack on lay Catholics and other people of good will.

"I am very grateful to the people of other faiths and the many citizens who have stood up to defend religious freedom," he said. "This time it was the Roman Catholic Church that was singled out. Next time, it might be another church."

The First Amendment protects the rights of citizens to bring convictions to the public square without fear of retaliation from public officials, added Bishop Lori.

"Bill 1098 should never have been raised by the judiciary committee, even for a hearing," he said. "Let's bury it for good."

The stated purpose of Bill 1098 was to address financial mismanagement



Children from a Catholic elementary school sing patriotic songs at the Connecticut State Capitol March 11. They were among the more than 5,000 people who participated in a rally advocating religious freedom and protesting legislation that would strip the Catholic Church of its right to self govern.

in parishes. But as speakers pointed out, parish finance scandals are rare. There are more than 300 parishes in Connecticut, but two parishes in recent years have been struck by scandals under their former pastors.

Since the Church is committed to financial transparency and has implemented safeguards to prevent such incidents from happening, Bill 1098 was "not only constitutionally wrong, but absolutely unnecessary,"

said Hank Satterthwaite, a parishioner at St. John's Church in Darien, Conn., where one of the scandals occurred.

Satterthwaite, who serves as chairman of the finance committee at St. John's, added that the parish community has given its full support to the pastor and bishop.

Read more information about Bill 1098 and watch videos from the March 11 rally at www.kofc.org. ❖

JOHN A. MARRELLA APPOINTED SUPREME ADVOCATE

On Feb. 7, members of the Board of Directors, at their quarterly meeting, appointed John A. Marrella as supreme advocate. He succeeds Paul R. Devin, who has retired.

A native of the Bronx, N.Y., Marrella graduated from Harvard Law School and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 1990. After working as a trial attorney at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., until 1998, he joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Haven, Conn., where he was responsible for investigating and prosecuting a variety of criminal offenses. In 2007, Marrella returned to Washington to serve as deputy assistant attorney general for criminal tax enforcement at the Department of Justice.

Marrella is a member of St. Thomas More Council 13500 in New Haven. He and his wife, Amey, are members of St. Mary's Parish.



John A. Marrella



Paul R. Devin

Devin, a graduate of Boston College and Boston University School of Law, served as supreme advocate since October 2002. Before joining the Supreme Council in 2001 as executive vice president of legal affairs, Devin was a senior partner in the Boston law firm Peabody & Arnold, LLP, where he practiced law for 34 years. He and his wife, Judi, have two children and four grandchildren. ❖

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to this crisis will be complete if it does not include the invaluable person-to-person component as well as detailed community knowledge that the organizations assembled brought to the table."

'THE FIRST PRINCIPLE'

Jesuit Father Richard Ryscavage, a professor of sociology and the founding director of the Center for Faith and Public Life, served as moderator of the summit. "Nationally, perhaps 25 percent of Americans do volunteer work," he said. "We think we can improve that statistic dramatically, especially if we work together."

Throughout the day, panelists identified several trends in volunteerism. "Increasingly, we are seeing people who have been laid off and want the spiritual, physical and emotional connection of being with other people, and also opportunities to keep their skills refined," said Bertina Ceccarelli of the United Way of New York City. Companies and current employees are also seeking opportunities for skills-based volunteering, she added.

Many of the panelists also noted a growing trend of families seeking to serve together. They said that parents recognize volunteering as an



Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York stands with Michael Purcaro, executive director of the Public Health Foundation of Connecticut and a member of Our Lady of Fatima Council 4122 in Rockville. The Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network worked with Purcaro to produce "On Watch," a television program to connect volunteers to emergency service needs throughout the state.

opportunity to teach important values to their children, particularly with regard to personally helping those less fortunate.

Supreme Chaplain Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., said that local dioceses are often the largest providers of social and education services aside from the government. He explained that for people of faith, there is an extra motivation to serve their neighbors. "The first principle is charity," he said. "Any time we are doing anything less than that, we are being untrue to a Gospel imperative."

Similarly, Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, said that economic reasons should not be the primary motivation for soliciting volunteers. Even more important is giving others the opportunity to participate in corporal works of mercy. "If we do not invite volunteers, we are doing them a disservice," he said.

In addition to its 60,000 paid employees, Catholic Charities involves more than 200,000 volunteers. In order for an organization to have a successful volunteer program, Father Snyder explained, there must be an infrastructure to support it. In the face of economic difficulties, organizations may be tempted to cut the role of volunteer coordinator. "That is not a wise thing to do," Father Snyder said, "because you lose more than you gain."

MOVING FORWARD

In his closing remarks, Anderson issued a call to promote volunteerism in a number of ways. Specifically, he called on:

- The government to consult with volunteer organizations before creating new volunteer programs.
- Businesses to create and expand corporate volunteer programs.
- Educational institutions to pro-



Jesuit Father Richard Ryscavage, founding director of the Center for Faith and Public Life at Fairfield University, moderated the Feb. 27 summit on volunteerism in New York City. Panelists included (sitting, left to right) Alex Knopp of Yale University, Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities, and Mei Cobb, vice president of volunteer engagement for United Way of America.

mote volunteerism among college students.

- Places of worship to reach out to their congregations directly about volunteer opportunities.
- The media to conduct telethons for volunteers — and to devote space in print media to volunteer opportunities.
- And non-profits to improve overall collaboration with each other.

"This crisis is unprecedented in our lifetimes," said Anderson, "and our response must be as well."

"Nationally, perhaps 25 percent of Americans do volunteer work. We think we can improve that statistic dramatically, especially if we work together."

To maintain the momentum of the summit, the supreme knight announced that the Knights would work with the participating groups to develop a Web site, which will serve as a source of information for the public.

"This summit is an important first step," Anderson said. "It should not be an end, but a beginning."

The summit's speeches and panel discussions can be viewed on the Web at www.kofc.org. ❖



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BY THOMAS P. SMITH JR.
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
(AGENCIES AND MARKETING)

Here is the one thing we all have to remember as we navigate these very difficult economic waters: Our view of the financial services industry does not change our need for financial products. Nothing that has happened on Wall Street impacts the amount of money you will need when you retire; or how much life insurance you need to protect your family; or whether a long-term care product has a place in your life. Regardless of whether or not you feel confident in the nation's stock

brokerage or investment firms, remember that your family's needs have not changed! If anything, your needs have increased.

I worry that too many of us are frozen with uncertainty. We are aware of the crisis and aware of the ongoing need to plan and protect, but we are still waiting it out and hunkering down.

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not change our need for
financial products.

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