

Catholic Coalition

Against Religious Tests For Office

News Release – embargoed till midnight June 15

Washington, DC - June 15, 2020 -- A group of Catholic activists has asked 5 Democratic senators in reelection fights to push a plank at the party's Milwaukee convention that breaks with their own Senate leaders and backs Catholic rights to hold office.

Citing harassment of Catholic nominees for court positions by Senators Schumer, Durbin, Feinstein, Harris and Booker, the letter emphasizes that the criticism of these attacks on Catholics does not just come from Catholic or partisan activists. The letters include recent articles and letters of concern and protest about unconstitutional anti-religious bias (citing Article VI of the Constitution) from a variety of sources including: the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Director, Notre Dame University president, Princeton University president, and Harvard Law Review.

“Senator, during all these controversies you have never spoken out against these attacks on religious liberty,” says the letter to each of the 5 senators and “we ask you to do so now on behalf of your Catholic constituents and, indeed, for all Americans who value our national tradition of religious freedom.”

“ We ask that you to do this by using your influence with the national Democratic leadership and place a plank in the party 2020 Platform at your convention this July in Milwaukee specifically endorsing Article VI and condemning any attempts to establish a religious test for public office or engage in anti-Catholic attacks.”

As a Democratic incumbent who faces an intense fight for reelection, your party's leaders will, we believe, pay close attention to what you have to say on this issue since they are anxious to help you in your reelection effort.

“Political Realities” -- Ed Martin

Ed Martin, leader of the recently established ad hoc group recently organized to safeguard the right of Catholics to hold office, said his recent letter is about “political realities.”

“Peters is facing a very tough opponent in Michigan. Senators Shaheen and Smith have states that are trending pro-Trump but their voting record puts no distance between themselves and the Schumer-Pelosi-AOC Squad. Warner faces Virginians unhappy with the state’s Democratic administration and charges that he was part of the SpyGate coverup. And Doug Jones as to explain to Alabamans why he’s a Schumer sidekick who voted the straight liberal line.”

“ We also think there really is a chance to get this plank into the platform because of another and even larger political reality – the Democratic Party does not need to be struggling with the Catholic issue at the same time it is struggling with Defund the Police or a Green New Deal that their opposition will be saying is going to wipe out hundreds of thousands if not millions of job.”

“That’s why we think there is a chance the party leadership might actually swallow their pride and do a *mea culpa*, if I may be permitted liturgical reference.” Martin added.

“Remember what the Democratic Senate leaders did with their harassment of Catholic nominees did not just cause complaints from their political opponents – complaints came from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Director and Notre Dame and Princeton Presidents. Even the Harvard Law Review had a disapproving note.”

“Democrats are Invited to Lead on This” -- Ed Martin

“Let me be clear: I have since 2015 supported Donald Trump and his policies and continue to do so today. But this issue transcends any party - both parties should respect Catholics and I hope the Democrat Party takes this chance to remove this blight on their work. Democrats are invited to lead on this important issue.”