

Alexia Kelley appointment is a good thing

Michael Sean Winters | Jun. 5, 2009 NCR Today

Alexia Kelley has an impressive track record of working for social justice. She worked for years at the Campaign for Human Development, the arm of the USCCB charged with fighting poverty. She went on to co-found Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good. Now, she has been named Director of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Department of Health and Human Services. And, she became a punching bag.

The Catholics News Agency, which is to news coverage of the Church what Tass during the Breshnev era was to news coverage of the Cold War, [failed to note her work for the Bishops](#) [1], highlighting instead her support for the nomination of Kathleen Sebelius, ?in spite of the fact that Sebelius' own bishop, Archbishop Joseph Naumann, asked her to refrain from receiving Holy Communion because of her support for abortion.?

Yes, that?s right. Kelley ? and others ? agree that the Constitution prohibits religious tests for office.

Not to be outdone, Catholics for Choice have condemned the appointment.

In a [press release, the group said](#) [2], ?Ms. Kelley?s appointment is a defeat for reason and logic and calls into question whether President Obama?s administration is serious about reducing the need for abortion.? Actually, Ms. Kelley and her organization have been at the heart of the efforts to reduce the need for abortion by promoting legislation that will actually help women facing a crisis pregnancy. There is some concern about the verbiage, whether to say ?reduce abortion? or ?reduce the need for abortion.? Some pro-choice groups do not want to stigmatize the procedure. But, I think it is mostly a distinction without a difference.

In the event, the appointment of Kelley both is a distinction, in the other sense of the word, and will, we hope, result in a different approach to lowering the abortion rate from the failed policies of the Bush years.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=16194>

[2] <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/Anti-abortionAdvocateAppointedtoHHS.asp>