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One Cheer for Ohio Elections Board

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 15, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

The Ohio Board of Elections has agreed [1]with Congressman Steve Driehaus that ads by the Susan B. Anthony List saying he voted for taxpayer-funded abortion are factually inaccurate. State law prohibits such ads.

This issue is contentious and regular readers will know that I agree with Driehaus that the health care reform law does not provide federal money for abortions as groups like Susan B. Anthony List allege. The USCCB also reached the same conclusion and I think they were mistaken also. Indeed, I think the bill that passed is even better than the Stupak Amendment the USCCB supported because it will result in fewer private insurance policies that cover abortion.

But, the Ohio Board only gets one, not three, cheers. Yes, they set the record straight - by my lights. But, I wonder if the Ohio law will - or should - withstand a constitutional challenge. It is up to voters to decide who they think is telling the truth on such controversial issues, and while I think Susan B. Anthony List is wrong, I do not think they are lying if by lying you mean that they are knowingly telling an untruth. I think they are sincere, sincerely wrong, but sincere nonetheless. And, as noted, there are many serious, smart, well-informed people who agree with them, not with me and Driehaus. Not just the First Amendment, but the very nature of democracy seems to require that such ads be permitted. I am sure th Board of Elections on this issue, like the Susan B. Anthony List on abortion funding, is sincere, but I also think tey are wrong.

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[1] http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2010/10/15/ohio-ruling-casts-light-on-abortion-as-midterm-issue/