

Press Release – August 7, 2008

Catholic Democrats Calls on Senator John McCain to Reject Strategy of Politicking in Parishes

Group calls on Senator to Remove Deal Hudson as Catholic Outreach Advisor



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Boston, MA - Catholic Democrats is calling on Senator John McCain to reject a new religious outreach strategy targeting Catholic parishes, and the deeply divisive rhetoric of the man who first developed it. First announced on July 11th, this strategy is being spearheaded by Senator McCain's Catholic Outreach Coalition under the names of former Governor Frank Keating and Senator Sam Brownback. But this plan is strikingly similar to the 2004 Bush campaign strategy devised by current McCain Catholic advisor, Deal Hudson, whose frequent columns have for months heaped crude insults on Senator McCain's opponent in the name of Catholicism.

"The kind of divisive language in Deal Hudson's [column today](#), and the strategy of taking over our parishes for political gain, both represent a concerted effort to pit one Catholic against another at a time when we need so much to promote healing in our Church," said the president of Catholic Democrats, Dr. Patrick Whelan. "As Catholic Democrats, we believe that the use of our sacred spaces to divide Catholics is morally wrong."

The Catholic News Service reported that RNC Deputy Chairman Frank Donatelli, in his press conference on July 11, predicted a McCain's Catholic campaign that would be "very, very aggressive." He added, "It will involve literature, sending speakers to parishes and Catholic gatherings, a direct mail program and statements by Sen. McCain on issues of concern to Catholics." Deal Hudson had originally engineered the strategy to use parishes for political purposes during the Bush re-election campaign in 2004. But Hudson was compelled to resign as the major architect of President Bush's Catholic Outreach due to revelations about his 2005 sexual misconduct involving one of his students some years earlier. Catholic Democrats is joining with other organizations in calling for his removal from McCain's Catholic Outreach Coalition.

"Deal Hudson has launched an ugly rhetorical crusade against Senator Obama that is cartoonish in its vulgarity. It is beyond ironic that Hudson would seek to position himself as a Catholic expert on child abuse," said Dr. Whelan. "He engineered strategies employed by the Bush Campaigns that exploited our churches for partisan politics of the worst kind. We respectfully urge the McCain Campaign to rid itself of this destructive figure, as the Bush Campaign did just four years ago. More importantly, out of respect for our Church, we believe Senator McCain should jettison any plans to use Catholic churches as a staging ground for attacking his opponent in these last months of his Campaign."

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About Catholic Democrats

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Catholic Democrats is an association of state based groups representing a Catholic voice within the Democratic Party, and advancing a public understanding of the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching and its potential to help solve the broad range of problems confronting all Americans. For more information about Catholic Democrats please go to www.catholicdemocrats.org