

Brother JOHN (JAY) McCARTHY,

I am sending you this letter as a brother entitled to nominate and a vote for the John F. Kennedy Medal recipient. Together, with our LAOH sisters, Congressman Brendan Boyle has been overwhelmingly chosen as the 2020 John F. Kennedy Medal recipient. The recent announcement that Congressman Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania will be awarded the John F. Kennedy memorial medal by the Ancient Order has initiated some messages of protest and distress from some Hibernians. Congressman Boyle's "pro-choice" stances and votes while a member of Congress, and throughout his political life, has caused some members to question the validity of this award and whether it stays in line with the Ancient Order's mission as a Pro-Life organization. Specifically, they have cited Article XXVI, Section 7 of the Hibernian Constitution reading, "Nominators shall certify that nominees do not stand in opposition to the moral principles espoused by the Ancient Order of Hibernians."

Congressman Brendan Boyle has been vouched for by his Pastor at St. Christopher Parish in Philadelphia, who affirmed to his nominators that he is in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church. The Congressman is a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in good standing, the son of Irish immigrants and of a father who himself is a member of the AOH of long-standing. The Congressman is also a member of the Knights of Columbus. Congressman Boyle was nominated for and elected by the National Board and State Presidents of the AOH and LAOH in compliance with the procedures set forth in the Hibernian Constitution. The Congressman has been unwavering and active in his commitment to the Good Friday Agreement and a valuable ally on the issues of Brexit, Immigration, and the cause of a united Ireland. By no means is the conferral of this award an endorsement or support for his public position on abortion, nor does it reflect a change or softening in the AOH's Pro-Life position.

As to the objections raised, if we delve deep enough into the lives and positions of people under consideration, an objectionable finding is almost assured. If our purpose is to award perfection, especially given the broad range of causes championed by the Order, then we believe there would never be another recipient of this medal. The moral principles espoused by the Ancient Order of Hibernians are derived from, not superior to, the values of the Catholic Church. As noted, it has been formally attested that Congressman Boyle is in good standing with the Church; therefore by definition, he can not "be in opposition to the moral principles espoused by the Ancient Order of Hibernians" as that would imply there is a divergence in principles between the Ancient Order of Hibernian and the Church on the matter of Pro-Life.

In accepting this award, Congressman Boyle understands it is presented on behalf of an Organization that promotes a comprehensive definition of life in communion with the teachings of the Catholic Church, which actively advocates for policies that protect life at all developmental stages, from conception to natural death. We joyfully acknowledge the Congressman's active participation in his local faith community in Philadelphia and pray his continued interaction with that community and the AOH will help him evolve and reconcile his public and personal views so that one day we can add the protection of society's most vulnerable to the list of causes for which we applaud him.

We will always encourage our members to voice their concerns through the proper channels. We note, however, that no objection was raised to Congressman Boyle's presence on the ballot for this award, rather he was duly selected by an overwhelming

majority of selectors. Some brothers may disagree on this selection, just as we as an Order will continue to disagree with the Congressman's political views on pro-life. However, that right to disagreement does not absolve us of our Oath to keep inviolate the proceedings of the Ancient Order of Hibernians from all but those in good standing, nor to abide by the decisions of the Order when constitutional and lawful.

In our Motto,

Jim

President James F. McKay
Ancient Order of Hibernians in America
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