

Catholics return check from lawmaker over marriage vote

by [Jack Jenkins](#)

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(RNS) A New York lawmaker has found himself at odds with the Roman Catholic Church after a parish school refused a \$50 donation because of his vote in favor of same-sex marriage.

Assemblyman Joseph Lentol, a Democrat, sent a \$50 check to honor a student at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood only to have it returned uncashed.

The rejected check was attached to a letter from Monsignor Joseph Calise, the church's priest, who said Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio "requested that all gifts received from politicians supporting same-sex marriage legislation be refused."

The snub left Lentol flummoxed, he said, especially after the parish asked him to continue his 25 years of donations.

"I was very surprised and kind of puzzled," Lentol said. "I didn't know how (the bishop's statement) applied to me. ... It was something they asked for, not something I chose to honor any student with."

DiMarzio strongly criticized the New York legislature for passing legislation to legalize same-sex marriage, accusing lawmakers who voted in favor of having "curried favor with wealthy donors ... in order to advance their own careers and futures."

As a result, DiMarzio directed all Catholic schools "to refuse any distinction or honors bestowed upon them this year by the governor or any member of the legislature who voted to support this legislation," and said lawmakers who voted for the bill should not "speak or be present at any parish or school celebration."