



# Ethical Action Report



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The *Ethical Action Report* represents the views of the Ethical Action Office of the American Ethical Union and the American Humanist Association. The American Ethical Union takes ethical positions on public affairs only through resolutions adopted by its Assembly or Board. Past AEU resolutions are available, searchable by date or topic at: <http://www.ethicalaction.org/aeuresolutions/index.html>.

## **Civil Liberties:**

Support Patriot Act Reform

Urge Congress to protect the fundamental rights of Americans.

### BACKGROUND

Congress extended until February 3rd the sixteen Patriot Act provisions that would have expired on December 31, 2005. This extension was reached after the Bush Administration in December pressured Congress into revising the final Patriot Act reauthorization bill in a way that even further erodes civil liberties. The White House proposals reversed months of bipartisan negotiations and progress on demands for reform.

We must come together to ensure that the so-called war on terror doesn't erode our individual rights and freedoms. Congress has a clear obligation to protect our rights by amending the Patriot Act to place reasonable limitations on the use of surveillance and the issuance of search warrants, as well as to correct other defects in the Patriot Act.

Congress passed the Patriot Act just forty-five days after the events of September 11, 2001 and has been debating whether to extend some of its controversial provisions, such as the expansion of

wiretap-eligible federal criminal offenses and the disclosure of information gathered in criminal investigations to immigration, intelligence, and "national security" officials.

## ACTION

Contact your Congress members and urge them to support meaningful reforms of the Patriot Act to restore Americans' right to due process, privacy, and free speech.

We are at a critical juncture in efforts to bring the law back in line with Humanist and ethical values.

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## **Church/State Front:**

### Oppose Federally Funded Religious Discrimination

Tell the president and Congress to oppose government-funded religious discrimination. If you are a clergy member, or if you are a social service provider or professional, join the fight to protect freedom of religion and the First Amendment. Add your name to the growing list of Americans who oppose government funding of religion and religious discrimination.

## BACKGROUND

The religious liberty of Americans is under attack. Some members of Congress and the Bush administration are campaigning to allow taxpayer funds to be used for religious discrimination.

Under the guise of the so-called "faith-based initiative," advocates are seeking to roll back longstanding civil rights protections in federal social service programs as well as to apply a provision known as "charitable choice" to some of these same programs.

Such proposals seek to grant religious social service providers—who have long provided admirable and essential services to America's communities—the right to discriminate, proselytize, and play by different rules than other charities while spending tax dollars. If these efforts are successful, social workers, psychologists, counselors, teachers, and others seeking to work in tax-funded social service programs could be denied jobs solely because of their faith.

This would be a radical shift away from the American tradition of religious freedom.

The American Humanist Association is a member of the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination, a group of religious, civil rights, labor, education, health, and advocacy organizations who believe in defending the First Amendment and the religious liberty of all Americans.

Supporting the good work of faith-based social service providers should not mean abandoning basic American ideals. We must not allow the vital services of faith-based groups to become co-opted by the government as mere government-funded religion.

The government already can and does work collaboratively with faith-based organizations. It has long granted tax dollars to religious social service providers that agree not to discriminate in hiring or providing services, and that operate their social services in a secular manner.

## ACTION

Legislation allowing discrimination in essential programs like Head Start and job training under the Workforce Investment Act will soon come before Congress.

To read more, and sign a letter to the president and Congress, go to:  
<http://www.stopreligiousdiscrimination.com>.

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## **Privacy Rights:**

Secret Spying: It's Time to Put Civil Liberties First

Tell your Congress members to protect our civil liberties—demand that Bush and his administration be held accountable for taking our liberties one step too far.

## BACKGROUND

In a clear attempt to mislead during the State of the Union Address, President Bush called the domestic spying program that his administration is conducting without warrants a “terrorist surveillance program” and had the tenacity to imply that the 9/11 tragedy could have been averted if this program were in place at that time.

As members of the ethical community, we are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity—from the freedom to have private conversations without government surveillance to humane treatment for all. We have an ethical responsibility to demand accountability.

The truth, revealed in part by an in-depth investigative *New York Times* report, is that Bush secretly authorized the National Security Agency to eavesdrop on the phone calls and e-mails of Americans without obtaining required warrants. This Bush-approved National Security Agency spying program is a violation of our Fourth Amendment right to due process and is an infringement on our right to privacy.

There will be a Senate hearing, Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, addressing the National Security Agency spy program. We must let our elected officials know how strongly we feel about this matter. Don't let unethical and unconstitutional actions be swept under the rug!

## ACTION

Urge your Congress members to demand that the Department of Justice appoint a special counsel to investigate any and all crimes committed and urge that the investigation on unwarranted spying continue unheeded.

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## **Save Darfur, Sudan:**

Join the Million Voices for Darfur Campaign

Urge President Bush to take the ethical step of leading the international community in protecting civilians in Darfur, Sudan.

## BACKGROUND

In previous *Ethical Action Reports*, we have asked you to raise your ethical voices to take immediate action to alleviate the suffering of the people of Darfur.

We are at a critical juncture. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the U.S. assumed the presidency of the UN Security Council for one month. We must continue to demand action, leadership, and accountability to bring an end to the genocide in Darfur, Sudan.

Since February 2003, violence and destruction have raged in Darfur, Sudan. It's estimated that 400,000 people have died due to violence, disease, and starvation, and over 2.5 million people have been displaced from their homes.

## ACTION

We urge you to join the Save Darfur Coalition's Million Voices for Darfur Campaign by sending a postcard to President Bush and demand action—we can't allow complacency in the face of a tragedy so great and so preventable.

The goal of the Million Voices for Darfur campaign is to generate one million hand-written and electronic postcards from Americans demanding a stronger and more effective U.S. response.

Specifically, the Million Voices for Darfur campaign calls on the U.S. government to support a stronger multinational force to protect the civilians of Darfur.

Visit <http://www.millionvoicesfordarfur.org/> to send an e-postcard to President Bush, order postcards, and learn more about how you can help.

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## *Contacting Elected Officials*

### **White House**

#### *Mailing Address*

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

#### *Phone Numbers*

Comments: (202) 456-1111  
Fax: (202) 456-2461

#### *E-Mail*

President George W. Bush:  
[president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

Vice President Richard Cheney:  
[vice.president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:vice.president@whitehouse.gov)

### **Congress**

#### *Mailing Address*

United States Senate  
*or*  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

#### *Phone Number*

Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121

#### *E-mail*

Visit <http://www.senate.gov> or  
<http://www.house.gov> to use your  
representatives' e-mail contact forms.

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