



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:

Stand Up for the Constitution: Oppose the Flag Amendment

Urge your members of Congress to oppose the Flag Protection Act of 2005.

BACKGROUND

Congress is once again considering legislation to allow the government to make it a crime to desecrate the flag. The Flag Protection Act of 2005 specifically proposes an amendment to the Constitution authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

Remind Congress of their priorities! For instance, rather than properly armoring troop vehicles in Iraq and providing veterans with the health care they need, the proposed amendment would permit laws banning flag desecration.

American patriotism is more than symbols; it's also about the freedom of conscience. The Flag Protection Act of 2005 would jeopardize this freedom.

ACTION

Urge your members of Congress to oppose the Flag Protection Act of 2005. This legislation would curtail the right of Americans to voice their opinions.

Civil Rights:

Oppose the Marriage Protection Amendment (formerly the Federal Marriage Amendment)

Urge your senators to oppose writing discrimination into the Constitution.

BACKGROUND

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, MD (R-TN) publicly stated that on June 5, 2006 the Senate will vote on the Marriage Protection Amendment (formerly the Federal Marriage Amendment) that would legally define marriage as the union between a man and a woman. The discriminatory Marriage Protection Amendment could also jeopardize state and local domestic partnership laws and nullify civil rights protections based on marital status.

From a fundamental ethical and humanist perspective, we urge you to raise your voices in opposition to the Marriage Protection Amendment as well as any other legislation or amendment that excludes, discriminates, or restricts the rights of American citizens solely on the basis of their sexual orientation.

The Marriage Protection Amendment is a deliberate attempt to write discrimination into our Constitution and confer second-class citizenship upon gay and lesbian Americans. The General Accounting Office reports that there are over 1,000 federal and approximately 300 state rights, benefits, and privileges that are connected with marriage that the Marriage Protection Amendment would unconstitutionally deny gays, lesbians, and their children.

The Marriage Protection Amendment wouldn't only endorse discrimination, but also violate the proud, longstanding American tradition of church-state separation. Currently, the First Amendment protects churches from having to perform marriage ceremonies with which they don't agree, but the Marriage Protection Amendment would egregiously enshrine a particular religious view of marriage in our Constitution. This is a deliberate attempt to favor some religious views over others by designating same-sex marriage as unconstitutional.

By codifying discrimination into the Constitution for the first time in history, the Marriage Protection Amendment would prevent further debate on this issue. The vague language of the Marriage Protection Amendment also has the potential to limit public discourse by stripping state sovereignty in deciding for themselves what marriage means and whether or not to extend the legal rights that come with marriage to same-sex couples through domestic partnerships or civil unions.

ACTION

Urge your senators to oppose the Marriage Protection Amendment and any legislation that on the basis of sexual orientation.

Peace and Conflict Resolution:

Support the Department of Peace and Nonviolence Act (H. R. 3760 and S. 1756)

Raise your ethical voices: demand a United States Department of Peace.

BACKGROUND

The time to establish a U.S. Department of Peace is long overdue. H. R. 3760 was re-introduced in the House of Representatives and introduced for the first time in the Senate in the fall of 2005 (S. 1756).

The primary purpose of a U.S. Department of Peace would be to research, communicate, and facilitate nonviolent solutions to conflicts, both at the domestic and international levels. The Department of Peace would also provide support for local and state governments to prevent and respond to issues of domestic violence.

The Department of Peace and Nonviolence Act also calls for a Secretary of Peace, who would serve as a member of the President's cabinet. The Secretary of Peace would provide the President, the State Department, the Departments of Defense, Education and Justice with conflict resolution techniques and multicultural relationship building skills.

ACTION

Urge your representatives and senators to Support the Department of Peace and Nonviolence Act (H. R. 3760 and S. 1756).

To learn more visit <http://www.thepeacealliance.org/main.htm>.

Health Care Reform:

Get Involved in the Cover the Uninsured Week: May 1-7, 2006

Support American health care reform by raising awareness of the unmet medical needs of thousands of Americans.

BACKGROUND

Close to forty-six million Americans don't have healthcare insurance, including more than eight million children. 18,000 people die in the United States every year because they can't receive the medical care they need.

It's time to raise awareness of health care solutions for all Americans.

Americans are coming together for Cover the Uninsured Week to raise awareness about health care reform. From May 1-7, 2006, organizations and individuals representing many sectors of society will join to tell our leaders that health care coverage for Americans must become a high priority. Cover the Uninsured Week is a campaign of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the nation's largest philanthropy devoted to improving health and health care, RWJF supports training, education, research, and projects that demonstrate effective ways to deliver health services, especially for the most vulnerable among us.

ACTION

To get involved and download free resources for your local Ethical Society and community visit <http://covertheuninsured.org>.

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