



Ethical Action Report



*A joint publication of the American Ethical Union (AEU) and the
American Humanist Association (AHA)*

Number 09-07

July 2009

In this issue:

Ask your representative to co-sponsor the State Secrets Protection Act of 2009 (H.R. 984)

Urge Congress to Create Health Care Reform Independent of Religious Preferences

Support PBS Ban of Purely Religious Programming

Urge Obama Administration to consider the appointment of Open Minded NIH Director

The *Ethical Action Report* does not represent the views of the American Ethical Union or 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://aeu.org/library/byresolution.php?case=resolutions>.

Ask your representative to co-sponsor the State Secrets Protection Act of 2009 (H.R. 984)

Urge your representative to support the State Secrets Protection Act of 2009 (H.R. 984) by becoming a co-sponsor.

[BACKGROUND](#)

The Justice Department has asked the 9th District Court of Appeals to throw out an extraordinary rendition lawsuit on the basis that it cannot be tried without revealing "state secrets." The Bush administration greatly expanded the use of the state secrets privilege to dismiss entire lawsuits in advance, rather than to object to specific pieces of evidence introduced in court.

The State Secrets Protection Act of 2009 (H.R. 984) was introduced to narrow the scope of the "state secrets" privilege. This essential bill would establish a procedure and standard for the court to assess a state secrets privilege claim, and would allow victims of government wrongdoing to seek justice without running into a wall of unnecessary secrecy.

This bill is also a crucial step in stopping efforts to protect those who torture and entire government programs from the legal consequences for their actions.

Urge Congress to Create Health Care Reform Independent of Religious Preferences

Contact your senators and representative and urge them to support health care reform that addresses women's choice and the LGBT community.

BACKGROUND

A number of religiously oriented organizations, among them the Family Research Council and the Traditional Values Coalition, are launching large-scale efforts to push for various healthcare policies that will constrict the medical care for women and the LGBT community.

Speak up and urge your members of congress and President Obama to only support legislation that's based on sound science and the healthcare needs of individuals and families—not policy that's based on dogma and scripture. Ask that healthcare reform address issues of affordable birth control, safe abortion access, clinic violence against women and doctors and effective sex education. Also urge them to focus on issues affecting the LGBT community, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, employer-sponsored health insurance, visitation and decision making rights and expanded collection of health data on the LGBT community.

Support PBS Ban of Purely Religious Programming

Contact the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) to voice approval of their decision to ban religious broadcasts.

BACKGROUND

The Public Broadcasting Service has announced it will begin enforcing a 25-year-old rule that prohibits purely religious shows from airing on its network. The six PBS stations currently carrying "sectarian" programming can continue airing their programs, but none of the other 350 stations can air any purely spiritual content, and no PBS station can offer new religious programs.

PBS is publicly funded through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Contact PBS to let them know that sectarian programming on public broadcasting amounts to taxpayers' directly or indirectly funding evangelism and that PBS has no business making any

endorsement of any religion. Show that you support their efforts to retain the public's trust in PBS by removing purely religious programming.

Urge Obama Administration to consider the appointment of Open Minded NIH Director

Contact President Obama to express opposition to appointment of Francis Collins as next National Institute of Health (NIH) director.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Francis Collins, the former head of the National Human Genome Research Institute, is a likely choice by the Obama Administration to be the next Director of the National Institutes of Health, one of the world's foremost science and medical research institutions. As director of the NIH, Collins will oversee a budget of \$30 billion, administering 50,000 grants to 325,000 scientists across the United States.

Although Dr. Collins commendably led the NIH effort that successfully sequenced the human genome in 2003, he is also the founder of the BioLogos Foundation, a group of scientists who "believe in God and are committed to promoting a perspective of the origins of life that is both theologically and scientifically sound." Many times Dr. Collins has publicly expressed his belief that the Christian God is the driving force behind evolution and biology.

President Obama, in his inaugural address in January 2009, promised to "restore science to its rightful place." Appointing an evangelical Christian who publicly promotes an agenda of reconciling faith and science is a clear mixing of faith and science. Urge the president to make good on his promise and appoint someone to the head of the NIH who will make informed decisions based on science and reason—not a clear religious agenda.

Contacting Elected Officials

<p style="text-align: center;">Congress</p> <p><i>Mailing Address</i> United States Senate <i>Or</i> U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515</p> <p><i>Phone Number</i> Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121</p> <p><i>E-mail</i> Visit www.senate.gov or www.house.gov to use your representatives' e-mail contact forms.</p>	
--	--

American Ethical Union ▪ 2 West 64th Street ▪ New York, NY 10023
www.aeu.org

American Humanist Association ▪ 1777 T Street, NW ▪ Washington, DC 20009
www.americanhumanist.org

To request that specific ethical action issues be consider for the EAR, contact:
Editor: Karen Frantz (800) 837-3792
report@americanhumanist.org
rlkiniry@sbcglobal.net, report@aeu.org
Richard Kiniry, Chair, Ethical Action Committee of the American Ethical Union

To share your views on national legislation with the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) go to
www.secular.org.