



# 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>.

## **Church-State Separation at Risk:**

**Oppose Federally Funded Religious Discrimination in Head Start**

Tell your representatives you oppose the Boehner Amendment to the School Readiness Act (H.R. 2123) because it permits your tax dollars to be used for religious discrimination. Tell them to vote “no” on the final passage of the bill, should the noxious amendment be adopted.

### **BACKGROUND**

Recently passed unanimously out of committee, H.R. 2123 is a bipartisan bill with provisions to protect, expand, and improve the Head Start program that benefits children across the nation. It currently maintains civil rights protections signed into Head Start legislation more than twenty years ago.

The Boehner Amendment however is an underhanded attempt to further the Bush administration's faith-based agenda by funneling public funds to religious organizations. It would allow discrimination on the basis of religion in employment.

It would specifically allow taxpayer funded faith-based organizations to hire and fire teachers on the basis of religious beliefs. It could even be used to prevent people with different beliefs from volunteering, and prevent underprivileged children from receiving a valuable education at an important age.

If passed, the measure would erode decades old civil rights protections in Head Start programs. Although Head Start is an important program, we can't endorse this bill if the Boehner Amendment passes, because it would legally sanction discrimination by jeopardizing the rights of nonreligious and religious Americans alike.

## ACTION

We ask you to contact your representatives and urge them to oppose the Boehner Amendment to the School Readiness Act (H.R. 2123) that would roll back these critical civil rights protections. If such an amendment is added to the bill, urge your representative to oppose final passage of the bill.

You can reach your representative by calling the Capitol Switchboard toll-free at 877-762-8762 and ask to speak with her/his office. The House website <http://www.house.gov> also lists the direct office lines and e-mail addresses for every representative. It's important that ethical voices be heard at this critical juncture.

The School Readiness Act is expected to be taken up in the House after the August recess.

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## **Human Rights Calamity:** Support the Millennium Development Goals

Raise awareness of the importance of accomplishing the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Tell your senators to support the International Cooperation to Meet the Millennium Development Goals Act of 2005 (S. 1315) and urge your local city council or civic groups to pass resolutions in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

## BACKGROUND

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) consist of eight goals approved at a summit meeting of 189 world leaders in September 2000. They are aimed at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development. The date set for the attainment of these goals was 2015. The AHA, AEU, and the AEU National Service Conference are working within the civic and nonprofit communities toward the implementation of the MDGs.

However, world leaders, including our own in the U.S. have been dragging their feet on funding and effort to achieve the goals. Instead of free markets for trade, industrialized countries continue to heavily subsidize products and regulate imports, and only five countries have met the target of 0.7 percent of the Gross National Product going to overseas development aid.

If we continue with our "business as usual" manner of developing third-world countries, Africa won't be able to achieve the MDGs until 2169. Hundreds of millions of people will be trapped in absolute poverty, children will be unable to receive primary education, and HIV/AIDS and other diseases will continue to rage out of control.

The International Cooperation to Meet the Millennium Development Goals Act of 2005 (S. 1315), introduced by Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), calls on Congress to make the achievement of the MDGs a top priority. The act also mandates that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice report to Congress on America's progress in accomplishing these goals.

## ACTION

Join the AHA and the AEU in ensuring that the United States fulfills its commitment to achieve the MDGs by urging your senators to support this necessary legislation, the International Cooperation to Meet the Millennium Development Goals Act of 2005 (S. 1315). Helping the world's most vulnerable demands immediate, collaborative, and comprehensive action.

To further show that you and your community care, encourage your city council or ethical culture society to adopt a resolution supporting the MDGs and join many others in support of fulfilling our commitments to saving and improving the lives of millions. For more information on the MDG campaign visit <http://www.millenniumcampaign.org>.

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## **Human Rights Crisis:**

### Save Darfur: Join the National Day of Action

On September 21, 2005 leaders from various religious, human rights, and humanitarian organizations will convene in Washington, DC for the National Leadership Assembly to express concern for Darfur. Members of the ethical community are encouraged to participate in action campaigns in coordination with this event.

## BACKGROUND

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.

Congress and President Bush have labeled these atrocities as genocide, yet 6,000 people continue to die each month in Darfur. The AEU and the AHA, alongside other humanitarian and ethical organizations, are active in coalitions to stop the genocide in Darfur. We have an ethical responsibility to continue to demand united action, leadership, and accountability until the people of Darfur are safe.

## ACTION

Participate in the postcard campaign by writing to President Bush and urge him to take the ethical step of leading the world in protecting civilians in Darfur. To obtain postcards please visit the Save Darfur Coalition online store at <http://www.savedarfur.org>.

You may also encourage your ethical culture society to join the Save Darfur Banner Campaign. The aim of the campaign is to generate grassroots awareness and support for ending the violence in Darfur by posting banners in houses of worship of all faiths. For more information about the campaign and to order a banner please visit <http://www.savedarfurbanner.net>.

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## **Wildlife Conservation:**

### Protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Take a stand for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by attending the Rally for the Refuge in Washington, DC on September 20, 2005.

## BACKGROUND

Over the past year opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling has been a hotly contested issue. The twenty-five mile stretch of coastal wetlands is rich in biodiversity and sacred land to the Gwich'in people, a nation of the Athabascan Native Americans. It's also the only remaining Arctic

coastline in America that is closed to oil exploration. Lifting prohibitions against development and oil drilling would cause significant and irreversible damage.

Although some have argued that these costs are justified because the move serves to advance our interest in energy independence, the reality is that the oil produced by opening the land wouldn't reach the market for ten years and would only cover seven months of consumption. The real motive behind transferring this public land into the hands of private businesses is to increase oil company profits and lift barriers to future drilling.

It's likely that Congress will address this issue soon after returning from their August recess and may try to use the budgeting process to authorize drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

## ACTION

We urge you to support the grassroots campaign to save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Please save the date, Tuesday September 20, 2005 to attend the Rally for the Refuge in Washington, DC and pressure Congress to protect this vital piece of land. Organized by Arctic Refuge Action, the rally will occur on the West Front of the Capitol building and will represent the diverse interests of conservation, faith, labor, youth, and Native American communities who care deeply about preserving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It's important for us to lend our ethical voice to this important cause.

For more information about the rally and transportation visit <http://www.arcticrefugeaction.org>. Even if you can't make the trip you can still contribute to this important campaign by contacting your senators and representatives to urge them not to lift prohibitions against drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

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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 [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) or [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) to use your representatives' e-mail contact forms.

**American Ethical Union** ▪ 2 West 64<sup>th</sup> Street ▪ New York, NY 10023

**American Humanist Association** ▪ 1777 T Street, NW ▪ Washington, DC 20009

Editor: Anne Lyster (800) 837-3792  
[report@americanhumanist.org](mailto:report@americanhumanist.org)