

The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Valerie Green
General Counsel
Corporation for National and Community Service
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525

Dear Ms. Green:

As your agency moves forward to implement the vital religious liberty protections set forth by President Obama in Executive Order 13559, the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination (CARD) and allied organizations write to express both our hope that the Executive Order is fully and faithfully carried out and our willingness to help you achieve this important goal. By establishing “fundamental principles” to govern partnerships between the government and faith-based organizations that provide social services, the President’s Executive Order represents a huge step forward in protecting religious freedom, especially for the beneficiaries of these services. These protections are important, as they help ensure that individuals in need are never faced with the stark choice between essential services and the constitutional and civil rights protections to which they are entitled.

CARD is a broad and diverse group of leading religious, civil rights, labor, health, secular, and women’s organizations. Our coalition has advocated on the issues surrounding partnerships between the government and faith-based organizations since the introduction of legislation with “charitable choice” provisions in the 1990’s. We remained actively engaged on these issues as the Bush Administration transformed “charitable choice” into its Faith-Based Initiative and have continued our advocacy as the Obama Administration has taken steps to reform the program. We care deeply about this issue and have the expertise and perspective that we believe offer great value to your agency’s efforts to craft these reforms.

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We bring these concerns to your attention in an effort to ensure that each agency implements robust and uniform regulations, guidance documents, and policies that clearly set forth the

rights and responsibilities of agencies, beneficiaries, and providers. In particular, these documents should clearly:

- inform beneficiaries of their religious liberty rights;
- provide beneficiaries the right to access an alternative provider if they object to the religious character of a social service provider;
- uphold the constitutional command that the government may not fund “explicitly religious activities,” by providing clear guidance on what constitutes such activities; and
- honor constitutional mandates by engaging in oversight and through transparency.

The attached analysis elaborates on our expressed concerns. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration and look forward to partnering with you to implement these important reforms.

Sincerely,

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United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
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November 28, 2012

Cam Kerry
General Counsel
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Kerry:

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November 28, 2012

Ivan Fong
General Counsel
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Fong:

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November 28, 2012

Tony West
Associate Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. West:

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November 28, 2012

M. Patricia Smith
Solicitor of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Ms. Smith:

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November 28, 2012

Phil Rosenfelt
General Counsel
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

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November 28, 2012

Scott Fulton
General Counsel
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

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Bill Schultz
Acting General Counsel
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

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Women of Reform Judaism

The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Helen Kanovsky
General Counsel
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Ms. Kanovsky:

As your agency moves forward to implement the vital religious liberty protections set forth by President Obama in Executive Order 13559, the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination (CARD) and allied organizations write to express both our hope that the Executive Order is fully and faithfully carried out and our willingness to help you achieve this important goal. By establishing “fundamental principles” to govern partnerships between the government and faith-based organizations that provide social services, the President’s Executive Order represents a huge step forward in protecting religious freedom, especially for the beneficiaries of these services. These protections are important, as they help ensure that individuals in need are never faced with the stark choice between essential services and the constitutional and civil rights protections to which they are entitled.

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The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Hilary Tompkins
Solicitor General
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Tompkins:

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The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Sara Lipscomb
General Counsel
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Ms. Lipscomb:

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The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Harold Koh
Legal Adviser
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Koh:

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The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Lisa Gomer
General Counsel
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Ms. Gomer:

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The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Ramona Romero
General Counsel
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ms. Romero:

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The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

November 28, 2012

Will Gunn
General Counsel
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Gunn:

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Secular Coalition for America
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Texas Faith Network
Texas Freedom Network
Transgender Law Center
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
Women of Reform Judaism