



# The CARE Act, S.1924

## *Common Questions*

### (Charity Aid, Recovery, & Empowerment Act of 2002)

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**Q: Is this the President's "Faith-based Initiative"?**

A: This legislation is a bipartisan initiative, drafted with the President's support, to help empower America's charities to do more good works and help more people in need. It builds on the President's Faith-based and Community Initiative, embracing many of the same principles and the same programs. And in some places it goes beyond the President's original plan, including substantial new funding for essential social service programs.

**Q: Whom exactly will it help?**

A: The bill is designed to strengthen governmental and private sector support for the nation's charitable organizations – not just faith-based groups, but the broad range of civic, non-profit, and philanthropic groups that are working to improve their communities. Many of those organizations have been hit hard by the September 11<sup>th</sup> relief efforts, along with the weakened economy, which together have put a severe drain on resources and contributions and increased demands. This bill will provide some important immediate relief, by spurring more private giving and offering more public resources, as well as sustained long-term assistance. Ultimately, though, it is communities and people in need that will benefit.

**Q: How much will the bill cost?**

A: The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the charitable giving and savings incentives will cost \$11.6 over 10 years. Several significant provisions would need to be renewed after 2 years. The increase in the Social Services Block Grant program accounts for nearly \$1.1 billion, and the Compassion Capital Fund accounts for \$150 million a year.

**Q: Why do the charitable giving incentives expire after two years?**

A: The war and the recession have put severe constraints on the Federal budget, leaving little room for major new initiatives. To keep the cost of this package at a realistic level, and to get the most bang for the limited bucks available, the sponsors of the bill decided to focus on responding to the immediate charity crisis and maximize the giving incentives in the short-term.

**Q: Does this bill include “Charitable Choice”?**

A: This bill does not include charitable choice. What the bill does do is remove some barriers small religiously-affiliated charities have faced when they try to participate in government social service programs -- barriers virtually everyone agrees shouldn't exist. These narrowly-tailored “equal treatment” provisions simply say that no social service provider should be unfairly discriminated against just because they have religious symbols on their walls, religious names in their titles, or religious missions in their chartering documents.

**Q: Why are the “equal treatment” provisions necessary?**

A: One of the recurring complaints from small faith-based social service providers is that their religious name, religious symbols in their facilities or religious language in their chartering documents has caused them problems when applying for government grants or contracts. Regardless of the debate on charitable choice, there is broad consensus that a religious name or the like shouldn't disqualify a group if they operate just like other groups. It's true for the larger faith-based charities like Catholic Charities and United Jewish Communities -- it should be true for smaller ones as well. The same goes for soup kitchens that have crosses on the wall or praise for God in their mission statements.

**Q: Who is supporting this bill?**

A: The CARE Act is the product of bipartisan negotiations between the White House and Senators Joe Lieberman (D-CT) and Rick Santorum (R-PA), the bill's lead sponsors. It is being cosponsored by a bipartisan group of Senators, including Evan Bayh (D-IN), Sam Brownback (R-KS), Jean Carnahan (D-MO), Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Tim Hutchinson (R-AR), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Richard Lugar (R-IN), Zell Miller (D-GA), Bill Nelson (D-FL), and Robert Torricelli (D-NJ).