

# The CARE Act, S.1924

## *Editorials & News Articles*

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

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“Senators meet with President Bush and Treasury Secretary Paul. H. O’Neill, seated at right, about the Armies of Compassion Initiative.”

Source: Los Angeles Times, 2/8/02



“The compromise was reached in negotiations between the White House and Sens. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), left, and Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.), second from left. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), right, was a supporter.”

Source: Washington Post, 2/8/02

# THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Monday, February 11, 2002

## **Editorial: Bush and Funding of Faith**

President Bush has been remarkably effective in compromising with Congress to push his biggest campaign promises. He's won partial victories on tax cuts and education reform. In both cases, he gave ground on some points in the hope of gaining more later, happy just to win on a few principles.

The latest example of this camel's-nose-in-the-tent strategy is Mr. Bush's compromise on his plan to expand federal support for social services run by religious groups, or the so-called faith-based initiative (inaptly dubbed FBI). He sees faith organizations as a needed government partner in addressing such problems as drug addiction.

He has endorsed a bill that marks a critical compromise for him: Religious groups would not be able to discriminate on religious grounds in the hiring of social workers when using public money for public services. The bill is sponsored by Sens. Joseph Lieberman (D) of Connecticut and Rick Santorum (R) of Pennsylvania.

That compromise is necessary for any FBI bill to pass the Senate, where many Democrats regard federal support for private social work as a GOP Trojan horse to cut social programs run by federal agencies. In fact, it's not clear where the estimated \$ 12 billion cost of the bill will come from.

Senator Lieberman, a moderate Democrat who ran against Bush as Al Gore's vice-presidential candidate, will be a helpmate for Bush in arguing for the bill, especially on its provision allowing federal support for religious groups even if they have a religious name, or display religious icons, at places for social work. That provision alone could be a way for Bush to keep the flame of his faith-based concerns burning.

In many ways, the bill represents true compromise, and the public may gain. It increases money for federal grants states use to provide services to needy families. Taxpayers who don't itemize would get a break for charitable contributions.

The Senate bill is still some distance from passage. But it's a useful first step toward Congress fine-tuning the constitutional boundary between church and state. Lawmakers and Supreme Court justices are aware of public pressure to allow more spiritually impelled activism into the public arena, whether it's letting students hold prayer sessions in schools or funding a church-run program to train welfare recipients for work.

The church-state wall must remain intact. But it won't fall if a few windows let some light shine through.

# The Dallas Morning News

Thursday, Jan. 31

## **Editorial: Faith-based initiative: Even half a measure must move forward**

Though scarred, President Bush is undeterred, and again is poised to wade into the politically shark-infested waters of faith-based initiatives.

A week ago, Mr. Bush told a group of mayors that he has not given up on this worthy idea despite the waves of controversy that sunk efforts last year. In fact, Mr. Bush told the mayors that he thinks a bill can make it out of Congress this year. He is expected very soon to resume a full-court press in favor of faith-based initiatives. If a bill does make it out of Congress, it most likely will be because the president and lawmakers now realize that getting half of a good idea passed is better than getting none of it.

Last spring, the Republican-controlled House passed a sweeping faith-based plan despite legitimate concerns that some parts of it would violate the Constitution. By summer, however, the early momentum of that victory had dissipated. John DiIulio resigned as head of the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. Then a bitter confrontation over whether religious groups would be exempt from state and federal anti-discrimination laws effectively doomed Senate consideration of any faith-based legislation.

The idea of government and religious groups working together to attack societal ills is too valuable to allow it to languish. The president must pursue a bipartisan effort built around getting the Congress to back the least controversial elements. These could be more tax credits for faith-based efforts, and tax law changes to encourage contributions to charitable organizations. The most controversial issues like charitable choice and discrimination in hiring would be returned to a back burner.

While less than what the president and House conservatives originally envisioned, a scaled-back version could break a legislative logjam. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle then must hold to his promise to allow fair consideration of faith-based legislation this session instead of holding it hostage to election-year politics.

By now, Congress should realize that government alone is not always the most effective deliverer of social services to those in need. Although a sea change is needed in the relationship of government to religious and community groups, faith-based initiatives must move forward this session, even if the steps are small and measured.

# Los Angeles Times

Friday, February 8, 2002 Home Edition

## **Bush Blesses Charity Plan; Giving: A bipartisan coalition of senators renames the initiative for faith-based social services and limits its scope.**

JAMES GERSTENZANG, TIMES STAFF WRITER

A coalition of Democratic and Republican senators won White House support Thursday for a compromise version of President Bush's proposal to give religious groups a bigger role--and more federal aid--in providing social services.

The agreement revives the plan, which stalled last year in the Senate. Its passage would put in place one of Bush's domestic priorities, one of the first he advanced after his inauguration.

The program has a new name that tones down its religious aspect. What the White House originally called the Faith-Based Initiative has become the Armies of Compassion Initiative. And it has a more modest reach. Rather than being open-ended, most of its provisions would have a two-year life unless renewed. The compromise proposal also eliminates controversial elements of the plan that passed the House last year on a largely party-line vote.

The House measure would exempt religion-based programs from civil rights laws and would let them make personnel decisions, based on religion, in programs operating with federal assistance. They would be exempt from local laws protecting the rights of gays and lesbians.

Those elements are not included in the Senate measure.

Rep. J.C. Watts Jr. (R-Okla.), sponsor of the measure that the House approved, called the Senate proposal a "good start." He called for greater leeway for religious organizations but said he is confident that differences between the Senate measure, if approved, and the House legislation can be overcome.

During a photo session in the Oval Office with the senators who helped negotiate the compromise, Bush said: "This legislation will not only provide a way for government to encourage faith-based programs to exist without breaching the separation of church and state, it will also encourage charitable giving as well."

He called the measure "a big step" toward harnessing the nation's compassionate nature.

The measure is intended to allow religious organizations to use federal support to take part in such activities as tutoring, helping the homeless, helping the families of prisoners and meeting other social needs without running afoul of the constitutional prohibition on the mingling of religion and government.

White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer said the measure "breaks down barriers where the federal government previously did not provide help to community or faith-based groups that were doing good works in their neighborhoods."

The legislation would allow groups receiving federal aid to display religious symbols on walls or use religious phrases in their names. That sparked criticism from the Rev. Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

"It is simply wrong for a publicly funded job-training facility to post a banner that reads, 'Only Jesus saves,'" he said.

Several senators said they hope the measure will help overcome what some are calling a crisis among smaller charities. The agencies have reported a slump in gifts after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks because many donors are contributing to charities created to help the victims.

Catholic Charities, for example, reported in December that contributions in the Los Angeles metropolitan area had declined 50% to 60% since Sept. 11.

White House officials and the senators said one of the measure's key elements would let people who do not itemize deductions on their income tax returns to deduct up to \$400 in charitable contributions--or \$800 for those filing joint returns--in 2002 and 2003. The administration says approximately 75% of taxpayers do not itemize deductions.

This provision, administration officials said, would encourage charitable deductions among a wide swath of low- and moderate-income people.

Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.), a chief sponsor of the bill, said, "That should unleash billions of dollars of charitable giving."

Another leading sponsor is Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA.).

Under Senate projections, the measure would cost the federal treasury from \$11 billion to \$13 billion, most of it through the tax deductions. The White House put the cost at \$10 billion to \$12 billion.

Among other provisions, the legislation would increase the tax breaks for corporate donations to charities. It also would allow donations from individual retirement accounts without tax penalties after the taxpayer reaches age 67.