

# Abuse in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative



---

## A Report by the Secular Policy Institute

April 22, 2015



### **Secular Policy Institute**

401 Ninth Street, NW, Suite 640

Washington, DC 20004

(202) 430-1888 office

(202) 888-0196 fax

[www.SecularPolicyInstitute.net](http://www.SecularPolicyInstitute.net)

# Table of Contents

|                                                                     |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Overview .....                                                      | 3  |
| Origins .....                                                       | 4  |
| Structural Problems.....                                            | 6  |
| Why Support Faith-Based Organizations?.....                         | 6  |
| Problem 1: A Bias to Proselytize.....                               | 6  |
| Problem 2: Lax Oversight.....                                       | 6  |
| Problem 3: Faith-Based Organizations Make Faith-Based Choices ..... | 7  |
| Problem 4: No Transparency .....                                    | 7  |
| Exposing Structural Problems.....                                   | 7  |
| Schools.....                                                        | 8  |
| Are Religious Schools Better? .....                                 | 8  |
| The Loophole in the Law.....                                        | 8  |
| State Level Action .....                                            | 9  |
| Why Do We Care? .....                                               | 10 |
| Next Steps.....                                                     | 11 |
| Adoption .....                                                      | 12 |
| AIDS Services .....                                                 | 12 |
| Crisis Pregnancy Centers .....                                      | 13 |
| Why Do We Care? .....                                               | 13 |
| Drug Treatment .....                                                | 14 |
| Elders in Need.....                                                 | 14 |
| Food and Nutrition.....                                             | 14 |
| Health .....                                                        | 15 |
| Historic Preservation .....                                         | 15 |
| Homelessness.....                                                   | 15 |
| Housing .....                                                       | 15 |
| Prisoner Reentry .....                                              | 16 |
| Refugees .....                                                      | 16 |
| Sex Education .....                                                 | 17 |
| Youth Violence .....                                                | 18 |
| Creating a Comprehensive Report on Abuse .....                      | 19 |
| Endnotes .....                                                      | 20 |

# Overview

Despite the existence of hundreds of thousands of secular non-profit organizations in the United States, and more that would be created by funding, American faith-based organizations (FBOs) receive \$210 billion each year from federal and states sources to provide services with the assumption that they will not proselytize or discriminate. However, this assumption is naïve and misplaced. Asking churches not to act churchy just doesn't work. FBOs have every motivation to proselytize and discriminate, and do.

Beyond the unknown amount of proselytization and discrimination, FBOs are demonstrably ineffective and even harmful in providing services, because religions make religiously-based choices that serve their own interests and ignore science.

Through school voucher programs, Americans pay \$1 billion a year for 250,000 students to attend mostly religious schools, a large portion of which openly teach creationism. Faith-based organizations have received more than \$100 billion of AIDS funding to work overseas in countries like Uganda, which has been led by anti-gay, anti-contraception zealots who have no place in the AIDS debate.

Millions of public dollars, in states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas, are spent on thousands of American "crisis pregnancy centers", which lie to women about the dangers of abortion, such as falsely claiming that abortions cause breast cancer and infertility.

A Congressional budget deal for 2015 included \$15 million for abstinence-only sex education, even though such programs have been shown to lead to higher rates of teen pregnancy and to teens with venereal disease not seeking medical attention.

Through Freedom of Information Act requests, it is possible to trace where public money is spent on faith-based organizations. However, because FBOs have an incentive to hide their practices, getting this information, especially in a statistically large quantity, is challenging. As a result, **no comprehensive report has ever been made on abuse in the faith-based initiative system.**

This report collects data that strongly implicates FBOs, and lays out the guidelines for what a properly funded investigation into FBO abuse would require.

# Origins

Despite America's founding principal of separation of state and church, faith-based organizations have received government funding throughout the history of the United States in order to provide social services such as education, food, clothing, and shelter. However, this trend accelerated in the 1980s, marking a shift away from government services to the use of non-profits, which were perceived to be nimbler and more efficient.

Adjusted for inflation, federal funds to nonprofit organizations increased 230% from 1980 to 2004<sup>1</sup>. The number of registered public charities has tripled in 20 years to nearly 1,000,000. Nonprofit organizations received \$347 billion in government grants in 2012<sup>2</sup>.

In 1996, sweeping changes to welfare law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), brought the Charitable Choice provisions, which allowed FBOs to participate in government funding. They were permitted to discriminate based on religion when hiring, but forbidden from discriminating on the services they provided, and forbidden from proselytizing or requiring worship. Upon signing the bill, President Clinton said his administration would not "permit governmental funding of religious organizations that do not or cannot separate their religious activities from [federally funded program] activities," because such funding would violate the Constitution<sup>3</sup>. Yet, these organizations could maintain an open religious identity with religious symbols in the office and in their projects.

State laws complicate the FBO-government relationship, with 37 US states forbidding state financing of religious organizations. However, states also fund more FBOs than the federal government, with some \$50 billion in federal money that FBOs could apply for in 2002 out of \$160 billion available from states<sup>4</sup>.

Having experimented with faith-based funding as Governor of Texas, in 2001 President George Bush issued an executive order creating the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), pledging \$8 billion a year. Attempts to create federal law to support FBOs failed in Congress, including a failed provision in the 2007 reauthorization of Head Start, a program to fund early education that would have allowed religions to participate and also discriminate on the basis of religion when hiring. However, 10% of Head Start participants were already religious organizations, which surely must have considered religion in their hiring practices.

In response to this failure to turn President Bush's executive order into law, advocates for religious funding found a workaround. Government funded vouchers for substance abuse and educational services could fund explicitly religious services provided that the recipients of the vouchers had a choice of services. Since recipients could always select a secular service, but would be selecting a religious service voluntarily, why not allow FBOs to include faith in their addiction counseling and education? Vouchers were also used in the \$30 million Mentoring Children of Prisoners program.

In addition, President Bush issued a series of new executive orders, including creating centers for the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) in 11 government agencies, designed to steer federal grants towards FBOs. The agencies with new Centers for FBCI were Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, Small Business Administration, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The FBCI heavily promoted the availability of federal funding to FBOs in the following areas<sup>5</sup>:

- Abstinence Education
- At-Risk Youth
- Crime Prevention and Treatment
- Elders in Need
- Food and Nutrition
- Health
- Historic Preservation
- HIV/AIDS
- Homelessness
- Housing
- International Programs
- Prisoners
- Refugees
- Rural Needs
- Substance Abuse
- Technology Resources
- Workforce Development

President Bush also launched the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which provided nearly \$100 billion worth of funds from 1998-2008, despite the provision that one-third of its funding be reserved for organizations, all of which faith based, that promoted abstinence-only sex education. (This one-third was later changed to "balanced funding".)

By executive order, in 2009 President Obama created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which promotes government working with FBOs in a synergistic and advisory way, and directs FBOs to government funding. Although President Obama reasserted that FBOs must avoid proselytizing and discrimination, studies of faith-based initiatives have not demonstrated any policy change or tightening of oversight from the President Bush years.

The money keeps flowing. Just recently, in January 2015, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo created a new State unit, the Office of Faith-Based Community Development Services<sup>6</sup>, funded with \$50 million.

# Structural Problems

## Why Support Faith-Based Organizations?

---

The argument for favoring faith-based organizations over secular ones asserts that they:

- Treat the “whole person” by addressing spiritual issues
- Better at placing recipients of services into an ongoing community of support
- Have more caring staff

Few studies have been done to establish whether these claims are true, and none has shown any difference in results between faith-based organizations and secular ones. John Dilulio Jr, the first director of the faith-based office under President Bush, wrote in his book *Godly Republic* that there is no evidence that faith-based agencies perform any better than non-religious providers of social services<sup>7</sup>.

However, what is clear is that tensions arise as a result of requiring religious organizations to act like secular organizations. These generate four problems which, it could be argued, indicate that **faith-based organizations are far less effective than secular ones**.

### Problem 1: A Bias to Proselytize

---

Removing faith from services offered is a conflict with FBOs’ missions, culture, beliefs of their staff, and their operating procedures. FBOs are not secular and do not want to be secular. It was inevitable that FBOs would exert some level of religious pressure that recipients of their services would feel. In 2006, the Government Accountability Office said that government guidelines to FBOs were vague and confusing, permitting widespread mixing of religious activities with government-funded services.

The conflict caused by the bias to proselytize surely outweighs any unproven benefit that FBOs have over secular services. If FBOs may only receive federal funding if they behave like secular groups, why not just limit funding to secular groups, and invite FBOs to drop their religious status entirely to participate?

### Problem 2: Lax Oversight

---

Mainstream bias that anything church-related must be positive has led to lax oversight. Therefore, violations of the law go unpunished. The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) came under criticism for funding groups that oppose condoms, promote anti-gay hatred, and in supporting Uganda’s new law making homosexuality an imprisonable offense. Funding was withdrawn in 2012 from the offending FBO, the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda. For an AIDS outreach group to have such a broken relationship to the gay community shows how religious biases undercut effectiveness and compassion. However, since then, despite a

2012 PEPFAR report assuring that it holds FBOs accountable for government funded religious activism, no other group has had funding even partially withdrawn.

### **Problem 3: Faith-Based Organizations Make Faith-Based Choices**

---

Regardless of whether they violate church-state separation, FBOs are religious organizations that make religious business decisions. They ignore science and reason when, for example, offering “sex education” or pregnancy counseling. Faith-based organizations are simply set up, first and foremost, to promote an agenda.

### **Problem 4: No Transparency**

---

To assure that secular non-profits spend grant money wisely, those that have incomes of more than \$25,000 per year are required by law to file IRS Form 990, a public document that watchdogs can use to learn<sup>8</sup>:

- The identity and tax status of the organization
- Who funded the organization and how much was given
- How funding was spent on program, management, and fundraising
- The organization’s net assets
- The organization’s major programs and their budgets
- Compensation and identities of board members and staff
- How they are governed
- Illegal nepotism (“excess benefit transactions”)
- Lobbying activities

This filing keeps nonprofits honest and efficient, allowing donors and the public to see how money is spent and how the nonprofit is governed. However, churches and other faith-based organizations are not required to submit these documents. This permits waste and fraud to go undiscovered.

### **Exposing Structural Problems**

---

Because of the tangled web of federal funding through two White House offices and 11 agencies, and even more funding coming from the 50 states, each with their own rules and lapses of oversight, a comprehensive study of abuse in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative program does not exist. While it's possible with Freedom of Information Act requests for a determined watchdog to pull up lists of which groups got which funding, exposing which organizations proselytize and discriminate is far more difficult. FBOs that break the law have an incentive to hide their behavior.

While building momentum for a properly funded, comprehensive report on abuse, we can rely on specific case studies and specific states where illegal activities have been uncovered.



# Schools

## Are Religious Schools Better?

---

Many parents prefer religious schools for what they perceive is better discipline and moral instruction. And Catholic school students place higher on standardized tests in reading and mathematics than public school students. However, in 2006 the US Department of Education reported that controlling for variables such as poverty, disabilities, and not being a native English speaker, all of which are more common in public schools, that Catholic students performed no better.

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY PRESS  
HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY ASSIGNMENT

Students are asked to write a paragraph that explains why the interrelated metabolisms of the cell are evidence against evolution.



Religious schools have two clear disadvantages. First, they get the facts wrong. Second, they feel and teach disdain for science and learning. Where scientific evidence comes into conflict with religious texts, faith-based organizations have an incentive to teach religion itself in addition to false ideas such as:

1. The universe is only 6,000 years old
2. Creationism and intelligent design
3. That the stories of Noah's Ark and Adam and Eve are literally true
4. That embarrassing parts of US history are not true
5. Scientific consensus is controversial
6. Climate change is unreal or not caused by people
7. Psychology comes from the soul, not the brain
8. Sciences including biology, geology, and cosmology are deeply flawed
9. The Bible is a kind of science

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL  
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The emphasis of the science department is the study of the fascinating universe created by God. Students are taught about the Christian perspectives of science and nature. The focus of WLHS science education is firmly on God and His Word, as given to us in Holy Scriptures.



States with voucher programs have spending caps, meaning that wayward schools that teach creationism are taking money away from secular schools that would not.

## The Loophole in the Law

---

Public schools are banned by law from teaching religious viewpoints, but private organizations that don't take government money may say anything they like. They can even indoctrinate students in debate tactics to reject science. Now a loophole exists for private schools to receive government funds.

Through America's school voucher program and tax-credit scholarships, taxpayers in 11 states now find themselves spending nearly \$1 billion per year for 250,000 students to attend private schools, most of which are religious and will teach a small or large portion of religiously motivated untruths.<sup>9</sup> For example, in North Carolina, 90% of voucher schools are religious<sup>10</sup>.

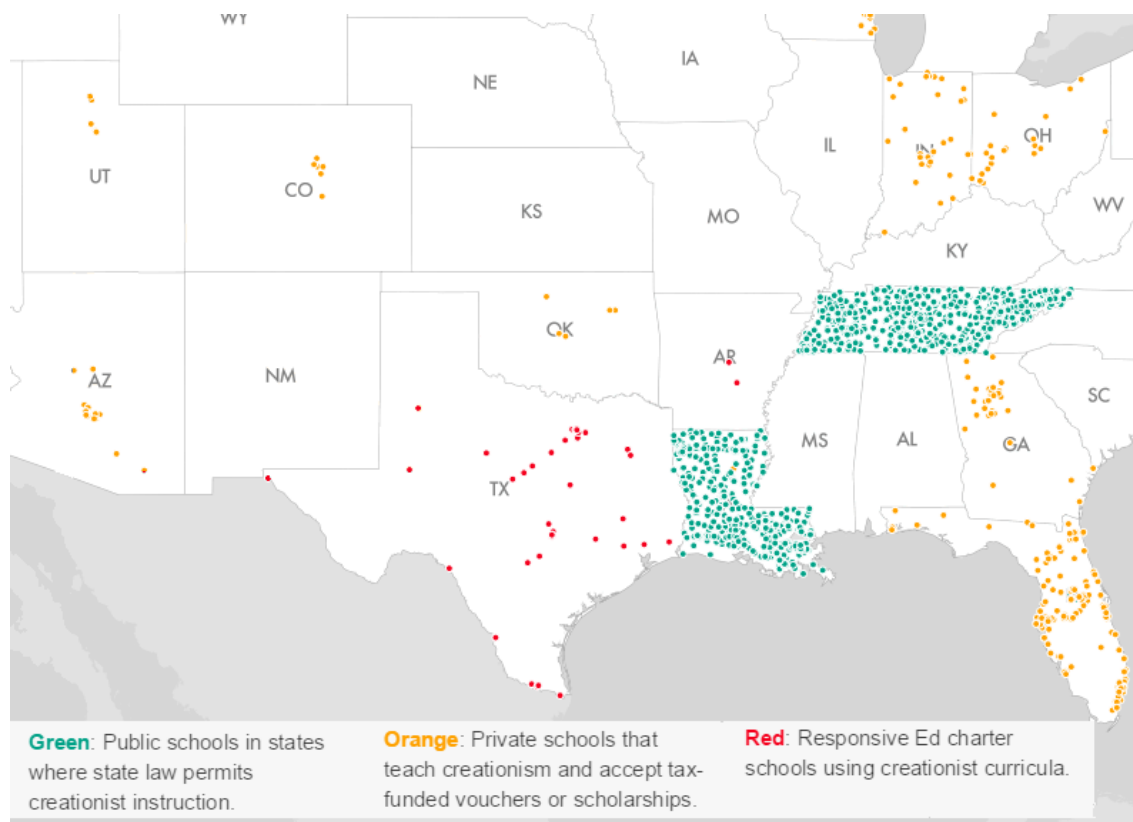


A 2011 survey of 900 public high school biology teachers found 28% teaching only evolution; 59% teaching evolution, albeit cautiously for fear of litigation or unwilling to admit teaching creationism; and 13% not teaching evolution, teaching creationism instead. Even in states without an explicit creationist agenda, fear prevents a less thorough teaching of evolution. Some teach evolution but confide to students that they are only doing it because the state forces them to, not because it's factual.

The legal argument is that since parents have a choice about whether to spend their school vouchers, those who choose a religious school instead of a secular school must endure religious teachings. However, “choice” is a term that may not apply for parents who don’t understand the depth of the teachings or are understandably reluctant to force their children to bus an hour to a distant secular school. The validity of this argument is a hot debate in society and politics. However, the US Supreme Court ruled in 2002 that school vouchers were legal even when supporting religious education<sup>11</sup>.

## State Level Action

Meanwhile, hundreds of schools use government funds to instill religion in the minds of children. In 26 states, legislatures are considering new voucher programs or expanding old ones. A 2013 partial study of select US states discovered 300 voucher school websites that are blatant enough to openly mention teaching creationism on their websites, surely a sign that they are just the tip of a very large iceberg.<sup>12</sup>



*A selection of schools that so openly teach creationism that they mention this on their website.*

States with especially egregious laws or policies include:

- **Arizona**, where parents with disabled children may receive \$13,000 respectively in state funding to purchase textbooks and hire tutors for religiously motivated education<sup>13</sup>.
- **Arkansas**, where religious preschool Growing God's Kingdom received more than \$500,000 under the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success initiative of 2004<sup>14</sup>, a state-funded pre-kindergarten program that is not a voucher system.
- **Kentucky**, which spends \$3 million a year on busing voucher students to private schools<sup>15</sup>, most of them religious
- **Louisiana**, which has the Louisiana Science Education Act of 2008<sup>16</sup>, allowing teachers to “supplement” education with creationist textbooks in public schools.
- **Mississippi**, where parents with disabled children may receive \$13,000 in state funding to purchase textbooks and hire tutors for religiously motivated education<sup>17</sup>.
- **Tennessee**, where the 2012 Teacher Protection Academic Freedom Act<sup>18</sup> allows teachers to dispute the scientific consensus when convenient for religious purposes
- **Alabama, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas**, which have state board of education policies that promote creationism<sup>19 20</sup>.

Religious schools receiving public funding are not all Christian. **New York** authorized \$125 million for computers for private schools, most of which are religious, including \$38 million for Jewish schools, through the Smart Schools Bond Act of 2014<sup>21</sup> The biggest recipient of the \$10.8 million school voucher program in **North Carolina** is the Greensboro Islamic Academy<sup>22</sup>.

## Why Do We Care?

---

With the average school year being 180 days, why do we care so much about creationism? Even 2 days of creationist instruction would make up only about 1% of a student's year.

The issue is important because:

- Taxpayers belong to a diverse range of religions and many have no religion. Public funds should not be given to a faith-based organization that sticks to a single religious viewpoint. The only fair option is secularism, the separation of church and state.
- The origin of the universe is arguably the most important fact to get right in science. Creationism teaches that the Universe is only 6,000 years old.
- Creationist schools break down trust in the entire scientific process by doubting scientific consensus, and replacing “science” with “Bible science”. Science isn’t just useful for constructing functioning computers and airplanes that fly. Critical thinking should be respected. Stifling critical leads to poor choices and enormous human suffering.
- Even worse, schools train students in debate tactics to defend faith against science. This deep grinding in of anti-scientific principles is cult-like, making anti-science ideas very difficult to extract. Instilling this level of opposition is morally abhorrent.

- Religious bias and themes pervade such schools. Children have rights as independent people who deserve a diversity of education. Just as parents shouldn't have the right to refuse their children scientific medical care, it could be argued that even religious parents who choose religious schools don't necessarily have the right to force feed their children religion at home, at church, *and* at school. This is even truer for parents who are not so religious but send their children to a voucher school to escape the low standards and sometimes dangerous environments of inner city public schools. Taxpayers who are secular or hold differing religious views should not have to fund these schools.
- Schools that teach creationism have a disdain for accuracy that permits them to teach a wide variety of other untrue facts that are less known in popular culture, for example:
  - The Loch Ness Monster is real
  - Islam should not be tolerated
  - Homosexuality is a choice that should not be tolerated and can be fixed through prayer
  - That vaccines can cause autism
  - World War I was caused by anti-Christian bias
  - Samurai led Japan's World War II invasions
  - Historical revisionism that supports the primacy of white Europeans and Americans over other races and nationalities
  - Women must be obedient to men
  - Every word of religious texts is part of a credible historical document

## Next Steps

---

Public funding for creationism is a topic on which we will draw many allies from organizations that promote science, a community that normally is too afraid to openly fight religion.

The above information was often extracted through Freedom of Information Act requests and much research, indicating that far more information could be gathered showing ubiquitous abuse of the school voucher system. So far no comprehensive study of public funding for creationist schools has ever been done.

Further study is needed.

## Adoption

In 2015, Michigan passed a law to allow faith-based adoption agencies<sup>23</sup> to receive \$10 million in federal funds. It is unsurprising that these agencies discriminate against adoptive parents on the basis of sexual orientation or marriage status.

Further study is needed.

## AIDS Services

From 2001 to 2005, 159 faith-based organizations received more than \$1.7 billion through U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) contracts<sup>24</sup>.

In 2004, President Bush launched the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which was funded to nearly \$100 billion over 10 years through 2008, despite the provision that one-third of its funding be reserved for organizations, all of which faith based, that promoted abstinence-only sex education. (This one-third was later changed to "balanced funding".)

Organizations providing HIV/AIDS services should be educated in the variety of non-heterosexual orientations. However, faith-based organizations are the opposite, discriminating against LGBT people and engaging in anti-gay advocacy in Uganda, for example<sup>25</sup>. The most errant FBO, the Inter-Religious Council had its funds reduced in 2012 but continues to receive \$2.3 million in US funds to provide HIV care. No other group has had its funding reduced since then. The Children's AIDS Fund (CAF) focuses on praying gay people out of their sexual orientation and providing only abstinence in its sex education, leading an oversight panel in 2004 to declare it unfit for federal funding. Yet it has received \$45 million through PEPFAR grants since 2004<sup>26</sup>.

Further study is needed.

# Crisis Pregnancy Centers

Objections to abortion and contraception are almost completely based on religious arguments. Trusting faith-based organizations with funds to handle these issues wisely is especially problematic.

Seven US states offer money for alternatives to abortion, according to the Guttmacher Institute<sup>27</sup>. **Texas**, for example, spends \$9 million each year on their Alternatives to Abortion program<sup>28</sup>, with 41% going to pregnancy centers, and the rest going to adoption homes and maternity houses. **Pennsylvania** spends \$5.7 million a year on a similar program, Real Alternatives

America has several thousand religious pregnancy centers<sup>29</sup>, which are often situated directly next to a Planned Parenthood, exactly what you would expect if they are trying to compete, instead of being properly spaced across a neighborhood for ease of access by locals.

Nearly all of these centers have no medical personnel. Instead they are staffed by volunteers who lack the qualifications to provide proper pregnancy counseling. An undercover investigation of 55 pregnancy centers in **Ohio**<sup>30</sup> revealed that staff falsely claimed that abortion causes breast cancer, infertility, and future miscarriage. None offered birth control services, instead promoting abstinence as the only way to prevent pregnancy. A separate investigation in **Texas**<sup>31</sup> found that crisis pregnancy centers provide fewer services but cost more per woman than family planning locations.

Further study is needed.

## Why Do We Care?

---

In America, 6.7 million women get pregnant every year, 49% of them unintentionally. They deserve diversity in choice for where they go for advice. If they prefer an organization with religious principles, why shouldn't crisis pregnancy centers get funding? This argument is similar to the one used for school vouchers, which spend public money on religious schools.

The issue is important because:

- Taxpayers belong to a diverse range of religions and many have no religion. Public funds should not be given to a faith-based organization that promotes a single religious viewpoint. The only fair option is secularism, the separation of church and state.
- It shouldn't need saying that deciding whether to have a child is one of the most important choices that a woman can make. It has the potential to impact her happiness, her romantic relationships, her family, her financial status, and her career. Women shouldn't be lied to with public funds about these high-stakes choices.
- It also affects welfare services when women who lack the emotional maturity or financial stability for raising a child are pressured into having one. Women who do not want a child are more likely to mistreat or neglect that child.

- Similar to with school vouchers, those making a “choice” often do not really have a choice, and many accidentally pregnant women are actually children who may feel undue pressure or confusion about where to go.
- Religious counseling is one thing, but presenting false claims as scientific facts is morally abhorrent and causes women to make life choices they would not make given the real facts. Pregnancy centers hide behind freedom of speech claims, but their rights are not completely uncontroversial. In February 2015, a judge in San Francisco even ruled that the First Amendment does not protect “false and misleading commercial speech.”

## Drug Treatment

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

## Elders in Need

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

## Food and Nutrition

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

## Health

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

## Historic Preservation

Federal funding of \$317,000 for Boston's Old North Church was provided in 2003, even though it is still an active Episcopal church<sup>32</sup>.

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

## Homelessness

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

## Housing

In January 2015, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo created a new state unit, the Office of Faith-Based Community Development Services<sup>33</sup>, to work on housing and job creation.

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.



## Prisoner Reentry

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

## Refugees

An estimated 60% to 80% of illegal immigrant women who enter the United States are raped on their route<sup>34</sup>. Faith-based organizations such as the Baptist Child and Family Services (BCFS), which received \$190 million in 2014 to run most border refugee shelters, refuse to provide these refugees with emergency contraception or referrals to planned pregnancy centers. They oppose a new regulation by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement that requires refugee houses to provide “unimpeded access to emergency medical treatment, crisis intervention services, emergency contraception, and sexually transmitted infections prophylaxis.”<sup>35</sup>

Further study is needed.

# Sex Education

The Congressional budget deal of December 2014 included a provision to spend up to \$15 million on “abstinence-only” sex education<sup>36</sup>, which teaches nothing about contraception and instead pressures young people that abstaining is the only way to avoid disease and pregnancy. This is wrong. A 2007 study in the American Journal of Public Health<sup>37</sup> correlated an 86% decline in teen pregnancies from 1995 and 2002 was due to a “dramatic improvement in contraceptive use.”

From 2008 to 2013, the federal government has awarded more than \$170 million in abstinence-only grants. Today the Department of Health and Human Services awards \$55 million per year for these programs. The Evansville Christian Life Center in **Indiana** received \$244,110 in September 2012<sup>38</sup>. The center engages in anti-abortion activism, including sponsoring Pro-Life license plates, and its mission is “Restoring the Lives of Families and Individuals through Jesus Christ.” They offer a free pregnancy test and ultrasound to women who will agree to counseling, but clearly they are not genuinely interested in choices.

Studies have shown that abstinence-only sex education is ineffective and leads to more venereal disease and unwanted pregnancies. Definitive studies have shown that these programs have no beneficial impact on young people’s sexual behavior<sup>39</sup> and resulted in teens who contracted venereal disease not seeking medical attention<sup>40</sup>.

Abstinence-only sex education is 94% of the sex education taught in Texas, and yet that state has the third highest teen birth rate in the United States, 50% higher than the national average<sup>41</sup>. New Hampshire teaches comprehensive sex education and has a teen pregnancy rate of 2.8%, America’s lowest<sup>42</sup>. New Mexico, which is severely lacking in sex education, is America’s highest, at 8%. Teen condom use in New Mexico is just 60%, below the national average of 75%<sup>43</sup>.

Federal funding is also paid to groups that promote marriage, including Indiana’s program Hoosier Commitment, which has received \$1.5 million through a Medicaid waiver; and The Family Leader, an Iowa program that has received \$3 million. Project SOS, The Center for Relationship Education, and the Northwest Marriage Institute, have each received more \$500,000 through 2012 from “healthy marriage” competitive grants from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Further study is needed.

## Youth Violence

Publicly funded faith-based organizations provide these services, but whether they proselytize, discriminate, give false information as advice, or simply perform poorly, has not been adequately reported on. There is no comprehensive information.

Further study is needed.

# Creating a Comprehensive Report on Abuse

FBOs understand that they are misbehaving when they accept federal funding, and yet discriminate, proselytize, give misleading and counterfactual “information”, and make religious business decisions that undercut the quality of their services. As a result, they seek to disguise this behavior. This has an eerie parallel to the way creationism is disguised as intelligent design, or the way some teachers state that they are only teaching evolution because of a state mandate and thus students need not believe in it.

Yet discovery is possible. Repeal Creationism discovered 300 private US schools that openly teach creationism and yet accept federal funding through a school voucher system<sup>44</sup>. Separate investigations by NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio Foundation and Texas Observer discovered that crisis pregnancy centers in Ohio and Texas were lying to women about the medical risks of abortion.<sup>45,46</sup> These efforts have led to political change by shaming and convincing politicians to vote in favor of science.

We propose a similar investigative effort, the world’s first attempt to compile a truly comprehensive report on abuse in the faith-based initiative system. The program would:

- File Freedom of Information Act requests to link public money to FBOs believed to cross legal boundaries;
- Where that fails, file lawsuits to get access to records that expose misbehavior, limited to situations where our case is so strong that we feel we will win back all court costs as part of judgment, a typical result of successful information lawsuits;
- Hire local, on-the-ground investigators to expose misbehavior;
- Publicly offer money to FBO service recipients to come forward with information about religious discrimination and proselytizing, which may be less expensive than investigators and have the side-effect of causing these organizations to shift behavior;
- Research public websites for evidence for example that schools teach creationism or that homeless shelters proselytize;
- Hire a polling company to survey biology teachers on how they teach evolution
- Compile and print thousands of copies of our report
- Disseminate to the media and political staff
- Lobby politicians based on our findings

A budget and full plan can be compiled upon request.

# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *Nonprofit Sector: Increasing Numbers and Key Role in Delivering Federal Services*, 2007, Government Accountability Office
- <sup>2</sup> National Center for Charitable Statistics, [Quick Facts About Nonprofits](#)
- <sup>3</sup> William J. Clinton, “Statement on Signing the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2001”, Dec. 21, 2000
- <sup>4</sup> *Federal Funds for Organizations That Help Those In Need*, White House Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, 2001
- <sup>5</sup> [Categories of Faith-Based Organizations](#), Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, & World Affairs
- <sup>6</sup> [2015 Opportunity Agenda: Restoring Economic Opportunity](#), New York State report, January 2015
- <sup>7</sup> [Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America’s Faith-Based Future](#), by John Dilulio Jr., 2008
- <sup>8</sup> [How to Read the IRS Form 990 & Find Out What it Means](#), Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York
- <sup>9</sup> [Special report: Taxpayers fund creationism in the classroom](#), Politico, March 2014
- <sup>10</sup> [Ninety percent of private schools receiving taxpayer-funded vouchers are religious institutions](#), NC Policy Watch, October 2014
- <sup>11</sup> [ZELMAN V. SIMMONS-HARRIS \(00-1751\) 536 U.S. 639 \(2002\)](#), Cornell University Law School Legal Information Institute
- <sup>12</sup> [Publicly Funded Schools That Are Allowed to Teach Creationism](#), Slate, January 2014
- <sup>13</sup> [Special report: Taxpayers fund creationism in the classroom](#), Politico, March 2014
- <sup>14</sup> [Religion taught in lawmaker’s tax-funded daycare](#)
- <sup>15</sup> [Kentucky spending millions on student busing at private, religious schools](#), Lexington Herald-Leader, May 3, 2014
- <sup>16</sup> [Louisiana Science Education Act of 2008](#)
- <sup>17</sup> [Special report: Taxpayers fund creationism in the classroom](#), Politico, March 2014
- <sup>18</sup> [Teacher Protection Academic Freedom Act](#)
- <sup>19</sup> [Evolution, Textbook Review Focus of SBOE Hearing](#), The Texas Tribune, September 17, 2013
- <sup>20</sup> [Eugenie Scott Misrepresents the Law on Evolution Education](#), Evolution News and Views, July 21, 2011
- <sup>21</sup> [N.Y. School Bond Passes](#), The Jewish Daily Forward, November 5, 2014
- <sup>22</sup> [Biggest recipient of taxpayer-funded school vouchers, Greensboro Islamic Academy, in financial trouble](#), NC Policy Watch, October 7, 2014
- <sup>23</sup> [Michigan House OKs faith-based adoption bill](#), USA Today, March 18, 2015
- <sup>24</sup> [USAID contracts with faith-based organizations](#), Boston Globe, October 8, 2006
- <sup>25</sup> [Obama’s Evangelical Gravy Train](#), The Nation, July 8, 2014
- <sup>26</sup> [Group Awarded AIDS Grant Despite Negative Appraisal](#), Washington Post, February 16, 2005
- <sup>27</sup> [Monthly State Update: Major Developments in 2015](#), Guttmacher Institute
- <sup>28</sup> [Budget Rider Nearly Doubles Funding for Alternatives to Abortion Program](#), Texas Observer, March 12, 2015
- <sup>29</sup> [States Fund Pregnancy Centers That Discourage Abortion](#), National Public Radio, March 9, 2015
- <sup>30</sup> [Ohio Crisis Pregnancy Centers Revealed: An investigative report and policy suggestions](#), NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio Foundation, January 2013.
- <sup>31</sup> [Pregnant? Scared? Can They Help?](#), Texas Observer, December 11, 2012
- <sup>32</sup> [Federal Funding for the Preservation of Religious Historic Places: Old North Church and the New Establishment Clause](#), Georgetown University Law Center, 2004
- <sup>33</sup> [Cuomo announces \\$50 M. nonprofit program headed by Karim Camara](#), Capital, January 18, 2015
- <sup>34</sup> [Is rape the price to pay for migrant women chasing the American Dream?](#), Fusion, September 10, 2014
- <sup>35</sup> [Faith Groups Are Trying To Block Emergency Contraception For Raped Migrant Children](#), Think Progress, March 5, 2015
- <sup>36</sup> [Congress Is Set to Give Millions of Dollars to States That Teach Abstinence-Only Education](#), Mic, December 11, 2014

- 
- <sup>37</sup> [\*Explaining Recent Declines in Adolescent Pregnancy in the United States: The Contribution of Abstinence and Improved Contraceptive Use\*](#), Am J Public Health. 2007 January; 97(1): 150–156.
- <sup>38</sup> [\*Obama's Evangelical Gravy Train\*](#), The Nation, July 8, 2014
- <sup>39</sup> [\*Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education Programs\*](#), Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., April 2007
- <sup>40</sup> [\*Abstinence and abstinence-only education: A review of U.S. policies and programs\*](#), Journal of Adolescent Health, January 2006, Volume 38, Issue 1, Pages 72–81.
- <sup>41</sup> [\*Abstinence-Only Sex Education Fails Teens, Texas Rep. Says in Opinion Piece\*](#), National Partnership for Women and Families, April 2009
- <sup>42</sup> [\*U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births and Abortions, 2010\*](#), Guttmacher Institute, May 2014
- <sup>43</sup> [\*Reproductive Health\*](#), New Mexico Race Matters Coalition, 2007
- <sup>44</sup> Repeal Creationism, <http://www.repealcreationism.com>
- <sup>45</sup> [\*Ohio Crisis Pregnancy Centers Revealed: An investigative report and policy suggestions\*](#), NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio Foundation, January 2013.
- <sup>46</sup> [\*Pregnant? Scared? Can They Help?\*](#), Texas Observer, December 11, 2012