

June 13, 2001

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Wednesday, June 13, 2001

- Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I recommend to my colleagues the attached article, "The Real Threat of the Faith-Based Initiative" by Star Parker, founder and president of the Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education (CURE). Miss Parker eloquently explains how providing federal monies to faith-based institutions undermines the very qualities that make them effective in addressing social problems. As Miss Parker points out, religious programs are successful because they are staffed and funded by people motivated to help others by their religious beliefs. Government funding of religious organizations will transform them into adjuncts of the federal welfare state, more concerned about obeying federal rules and regulations than fulfilling the obligations of their faith.

- If religious organizations receive taxpayer monies, they will have an incentive to make obedience to the dictates of federal bureaucrats their number-one priority. Religious entities may even change the religious character of their programs in order to avoid displeasing their new federal paymaster. This will occur in large part because people who currently voluntarily support religious organizations will assume they "gave at the (tax) office" and thus will reduce their level of private giving. Thus, religious charities will become increasingly dependent on federal funds for support. Since "he who pays the piper calls the tune" federal bureaucrats and Congress will then control the content of "faith-based" programs.

- Those who dismiss these concerns should consider that funding religious organization will increase federal control of religious programs; in fact the current proposal explicitly forbids proselytizing in federally-funded "faith-based" programs. While religious organizations will not have to remove religious icons from their premises in order to receive federal funds, I fail to see the point in allowing a Catholic soup kitchen to hang a cross on its wall or a Jewish day center to hang a Star of David on its' door if federal law forbids believers from explaining the meaning of those symbols.

- Miss Parker points out that the founding fathers recognized the danger that church-state entanglement poses to religious liberty, which is why the First Amendment to the United States Constitution protects the free exercise of religion and forbids the federal government from establishing a national church. As Miss Parker points out, the most effective and constitutional means for Congress to help those in poverty is to cut taxes on the American people so that they may devote more of their resources to effective, locally-controlled, charitable programs.

- In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I hope all my colleagues will read Miss Parker's article and join her in supporting a return to a constitutional policy that does not put faith in federal programs but instead in the voluntary actions of a free and compassionate people.

[From GOPUSA.COM, May 25, 2001] THE REAL THREAT OF THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE
(By Star Parker)

The faith-based initiative is our latest proof that politicians are great entrepreneurs in finding ways to expand the scope of government, their own power and control over our lives. This particular initiative should be of concern to all because, in the best scenario, it will only waste money. In the worst case, however, it will be destructive to our nation.

Although for President Bush this initiative is a crusade to reach minorities, welfare programs have already done enough damage in black America. Government dependency has created an environment in which black illegitimacy rates have soared seventy percent. This time the victim of government intervention will be the black church.

However, there is an even deeper concern facing us than this.

Those who claim that the faith-based initiative merely saves charitable programs of religious organizations from discrimination miss the most basic point. The main reason faith-based programs are successful is the fact that free people choose to fund them and that free people choose to participate in them.

The truth is that we all are already participating in a great faith-based initiative. It is called the United States of America and its principles and rules are in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

When we examine these great documents, we see that the founders referenced our most fundamental rights to our Creator and then defined the role of government to secure these rights. Our great and blessed country, has been a story of unprecedented success because of the crucial premise that man is and must be free to exercise his God-given rights.

It is worth noting that although the founders declared this; they then prohibited, in the very first amendment to the Constitution, the establishment of religion by government. Clearly, they did not make haste to keep government out of religion because they were not religious men or because they were opposed to religion or religious activity. They did this because they understood that faith, freedom, and choice cannot be separated and that it is critical to preserve and protect these core elements of our society.

Our goal should be to eliminate government from those aspects of our society that have been politicized: not to politicize the very faith and freedom that have made our country great. The very idea of welfare is the antithesis of both faith and freedom.

A true faith-based initiative is one defined by freedom and not one defined by politics. Humankind already has a tragic history of incidents where governments and politicians have gotten into the business of defining faith and religion.

I respect our President, but he is dead wrong on this one. We still have billions of unused

dollars in our welfare budgets. Let us return these funds to our citizens and exercise true faith that they will make the right decisions regarding charitable giving. Let us remember the simple wisdom of Ronald Reagan that government is the problem, not the solution.