

# The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

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August 25, 2016

The Honorable John McCain  
Chair  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
Russell Senate Building, Room 228  
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Mac Thornberry  
Chair  
Representative Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: CARD Opposes Taxpayer-Funded Employment Discrimination**

Dear Senator McCain, Senator Reed, Representative Thornberry, and Representative Smith:

The 91 undersigned religious, education, civil rights, labor, and women's organizations write to voice our strong opposition to the sweeping language in Section 1094 of the House version (H.R. 4909) of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2017 (NDAA). That provision would authorize taxpayer-funded discrimination in each and every federal contract and grant. We urge the conferees to reject this provision during negotiations on the conference report.

Notably, a bipartisan group of four Republicans and six Democrats—led by Representatives Charlie Dent and Adam Smith—submitted an amendment to the House Rules Committee to strip Section 1094 from the House NDAA bill, but the Committee prevented the full House from voting on their amendment. The Senate bill (S. 2943) does not contain such a provision.

The government should not fund discrimination and no taxpayer should be disqualified from a job under a federal contract or grant because he or she is the “wrong” religion.

We appreciate the important role religiously affiliated institutions historically have played in addressing many of our nation's most pressing social needs, as a complement to government-funded programs. Indeed, many of us are directly involved in this work. We also recognize that the separation of church and state is the linchpin of religious freedom. In our view, effective government collaboration with faith-based groups does not require the sanctioning of federally funded religious discrimination.

Because it is inconsistent with the longstanding principle that federal dollars must not be used to discriminate, we urge you to adopt a conference report without Section 1094 of the House bill, a sweeping provision that sanctions taxpayer-funded employment discrimination.

If you would like further information, please contact Maggie Garrett, (202) 466-3234 x. 226, garrett@au.org or Dena Sher, (202) 466-3234 x. 281, sher@au.org.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women  
African American Ministers In Action

Alliance of Baptists  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Atheists  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Humanist Association  
American Jewish Committee (AJC)  
Americans for Religious Liberty  
Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
Anti-Defamation League  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty  
BiNet USA  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Campus Pride  
Catholics for Choice  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Inquiry  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Council for Secular Humanism  
Disciples Justice Action Network  
Equal Partners in Faith  
Equality Federation  
Family Equality Council  
FORGE, Inc.  
Freedom for All Americans  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)  
Hindu American Foundation  
Human Rights Campaign  
Institute for Science and Human Values  
Interfaith Alliance  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Women International (JWI)  
Lambda Legal  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Legal Voice  
Marriage Equality USA  
Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers  
Movement Advancement Project

Muslim Advocates  
Muslims for Progressive Values  
NAACP  
National Abortion Federation  
National Association of Social Workers  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Council of Churches, USA  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
People For the American Way  
PFLAG National  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Connection Action Fund  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Pride at Work  
Pro-Choice Resources  
The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Secular Coalition for America  
Secular Policy Institute  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)  
The Sikh Coalition  
Sikh Council on Religion and Education  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Texas Freedom Network  
The Trevor Project  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
Whitman-Walker Health  
Women of Reform Judaism