

AMERICAN ATHEISTS, INC.

<http://www.atheists.org>

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ATHEIST CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP BLASTS OBAMA SUPPORT FOR BUSH FAITH-BASED SCHEME

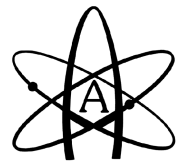
An Atheist organization which defends civil rights and the separation of church and state today criticized Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama for his support of the Bush faith-based initiatives.

Obama pledged to expand the federal funding scheme, which under Mr. Bush has given over \$1.2 billion in taxpayer money to churches, mosques, temples and other religious groups to operate "faith-based" social programs.

Frank Zindler, Acting President of American Atheists, said that Obama was "horse trading the constitutional separation of government and religion for votes."

"This makes it official -- the Democrats are trying to outdo their Republican colleagues in using religion and the lure of more taxpayer money to turn houses of worship into voting blocks," said Zindler. "Obama wants to continue the discriminatory policy of taxing millions of Atheists, Freethinkers, Humanists and other Americans who profess no religious beliefs, and give that money to organized religion. That's unfair, that's discriminatory, and it endangers our First Amendment freedom."

Dave Silverman, Communications Director for American Atheists, said that the Obama pledge to continue Bush's programs is a risky economic and social experiment. "The faith-based initiative allows religious groups to use our money in programs that are poorly monitored, have little or no accountability, and drain resources for their more effective secular counterparts," said Silverman. "This is pandering to religious groups, and offers the lure of free government cash in exchange for political support."



AMERICAN ATHEISTS is a nationwide movement that defends civil rights for Atheists; works for the total separation of church and state; and addresses issues of First Amendment public policy.

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