

SHUT DOWN FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS

In June, a few dozen left-wing organizations, some of which are no friend of religious liberty, sent a letter to President Obama asking that he rescind an amendment to an Executive Order that allows faith-based programs to limit hiring to people of their own faith. We said it was time to go further and to finally pull the plug on faith-based programs altogether.

President George W. Bush sincerely wanted to end discrimination in awarding federal contracts to social service agencies by including faith-based programs. In 2008, when Obama was running for president, he pledged support for faith-based programs provided they were emptied of any faith component: he opposed the right of these programs to maintain their integrity by hiring only people of their faith.

In 2009, the Obama administration balked: it said it would decide on a case-by-case basis whether a funding request from a faith-based program was acceptable. In 2010, many members of this program pushed to pare back religious liberty provisions that were extant.

When faith is gutted from faith-based programs—when Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Jews can't hire their own—we are left with a carcass.

It would be better to save the money (Obama's faith-based program received \$140 million in stimulus money last year) than to pretend that we are helping religious social agencies. The goal, obviously, is to convert these religious entities into full-blown secular organizations. It would be better not to let them hijack these programs in the name of assisting them, thus it makes sense to shut them down.