



September 30, 2009

National
Religious
Broadcasters

The Honorable Charles Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

9510 Technology Drive

Dear Senator Grassley:

Manassas, VA 20110

Phone: 703-330-7000

I am writing to voice the strong objection of the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) Association to your proposed amendment designated F-7, which would be attached to America's Healthy Future Act of 2009 presently pending in the Senate Finance Committee. Considering the broad range of non-profit ministries that we represent, not only Christian radio, television, and internet broadcasters, but also numerous churches and faith-based humanitarian, charity, and policy organizations as well, I believe we speak with a unique voice. We respectfully request that this amendment not be included without full hearings on this very significant issue.

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First, your amendment would give statutory authority to the I.R.S. to demand from non-profit Christian ministries, in the ordinary course of the form 990 disclosures, detailed information about their "governance" and "management" practices. NRB's General Counsel has advised me that this would run afoul of the warnings of the Supreme Court against excessive "entanglement" of government in the affairs of religion. This amendment would, at a minimum, invite intrusive federal surveillance of the internal workings of religious ministries thereby violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. I am a student of history, Senator, as I know you are also. I find it hard to conceive that our Founding Fathers would approve of Christian ministries being forced to give up their fundamental religious liberties as a condition of preserving their tax exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code.

www.nrb.org

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Second, we are currently witnessing an astonishing expansion of the scope, power and intrusiveness of the federal government. Your proposal, which would create a breath-taking increase in the power of the I.R.S. over non-profit groups, should be the subject of thorough, thoughtful congressional hearings, rather than being inserted into a massive health care bill during the heat of a complex political debate.

Christian

Communicators

Impacting

the World

NRB stands ready to meet with you at any time on this subject. We would be more than happy to provide an expanded explanation of our concerns, as well as to provide testimony at any future hearings dealing with the subject of religious non-profit organizations.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank Wright", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frank Wright, Ph.D.
President & CEO