

The LIGHT

One Nation, Many Faiths

The Interfaith Alliance

Summer 2007

The Interfaith Alliance to Congress: Legislate Against Hate by '08 Rev. Gaddy leads effort to enact Hate Crimes Bill, counter radical right's misinformation campaign

By **Preetmohan Singh**,
Deputy Director of Public Policy
psingh@interfaithalliance.org

Thanks to the activism of thousands of The Interfaith Alliance (TIA) members like you, a bipartisan majority in the U.S. House of Representatives passed a comprehensive hate crimes bill on May 3. As the legislation moves to the Senate and the president, TIA will continue to work at the local and national level to enact this legislation.

The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, president of The Interfaith Alliance, said to a Congressional briefing before the vote, "Unfortunately, a few religious voices, arrogantly and wrongly claiming to represent the view of all religious people, continue attempts to defeat hate crimes legislation.

"Their despicable language related to this bill should give away their motivation and identity as they rant and rave about the application of this legislation to 'cross-dressers' or as they raise the red herring of this bill criminalizing speech or thought. Let me be clear: this bill addresses



Kicking off the National Leadership Gathering, leaders and members of The Interfaith Alliance are joined by representatives of several religious and civil rights organizations in a rally at Denver's City Hall, calling on Congress and the president to Legislate Against Hate By '08. The Colorado State Capitol building is in the background.

vicious crimes and vicious criminals who act on their hate and terrorize entire communities."

For the last decade, TIA has been working across the country and in Congress to pass meaningful hate crimes legislation, culminating in the recently introduced Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (LLEHCPA—H.R. 1592 in the House, S. 1105 in the Senate). This bill would strengthen existing hate crimes laws to ensure coverage for all Americans affected by hate violence, including the LGBT community. The bill also provides grants for state and local hate crime prevention programs and gives the federal government greater power to assist state and local authorities to properly investigate and prosecute hate crimes. It is important to note that this is not a "penalty-enhancement bill" that would increase jail time for hate crimes perpetrators.

Hate crimes continue to occur across the country, and too many people are victims of

hate crimes, targeted because of who they are or what they believe, Rev. Gaddy said. In 2005, the FBI documented 7,163 hate crimes directed against institutions and individuals because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. And, according to a recent U.S. Department of Justice survey, more than 15 times as many hate crimes went unreported. But these statistics do not speak for themselves—because behind each of these incidents are individuals, families, and communities deeply impacted by these crimes.

Because hate crimes impact entire communities and must be thoroughly investigated, law enforcement groups, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, and many others, support the LLEHCPA. Additionally, TIA has again helped organize support from almost three

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

One Nation, Many Faiths. VOTE 2008 Save Religious Freedom, Revitalize Democracy

Dear Friends of The Interfaith Alliance,

This nation was founded on religious freedom, but politics disguised as religion has eroded our freedom and damaged religion. Real religion does not take away rights; it expands rights. Real religion does not dehumanize individuals, inspire hate, and incite violence. Real religion does not narrow life to a set of rules; it enhances life.

As host of State of Belief Radio, I have been surprised that we have as many secularist or atheist listeners as religious listeners. And they share most of the values that we promote in The Interfaith Alliance.

Whether you are religious or not, please join us and support our election year program: *One Nation, Many Faiths. VOTE 2008*. This election, already well under way, will determine the future

direction of American foreign policy and domestic policy, the future of the religious liberty clauses in the Constitution, and who will sit on the Supreme Court and make decisions that affect our lives for generations.

We can do together what we can't do alone. We must bond more closely, work more cooperatively, and not grow weary until we have made the political manipulation of religion and the sectarian manipulation of government so repugnant that the American public will tolerate such acts no longer. When all of us come together—speaking in different tones of voice, from different regions, from different religious traditions or no religious tradition, but delivering the same message with the same passion—our communities will come to their senses and revitalize democracy.

Every day, I live motivated by the hope that comes by knowing people like you and the great work you are doing. Thanks for your support and for your inspiration.

Warm Regards,



Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy
President



STATE OF BELIEF RADIO EXPANDS NEW TIMES; NEW STATIONS

Saturdays: 10 a.m. Eastern/7 a.m. Pacific
Sundays: 7 p.m. Eastern/4 p.m. Pacific
On the Air America Radio Network
and XM Satellite Radio – Channel 167.
For your station: www.stateofbelief.com

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT, THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE IS ON THE MOVE

Our new address and phone numbers:
1212 New York Avenue, NW
Seventh Floor
Washington, DC 20005
202.238.3300 • 800.510.0969



Ask Shayla

By **Shayla Woodson**,
Member Services Associate
memberservices@interfaithalliance.org

If you recently renewed your membership with The Interfaith Alliance, we all thank you. Our work greatly depends on continuing support from donors such as you and other members. Here are answers to your top three questions about donating to The Interfaith Alliance and our renewal drive.

- 1) **I did not receive a tax receipt. Are donations to The Interfaith Alliance tax deductible?** Donations to The Interfaith Alliance are **not** tax deductible. The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation are two separate organizations. The Interfaith Alliance promotes direct lobbying and community activism, while The Interfaith Alliance Foundation initiates programs of education, research, and civil discourse. All foundation donations are tax deductible, and the acknowledgement is your tax receipt.
- 2) **I renewed already! Why am I receiving this?** Your recent donation either crossed in the mail, or we may not have processed it yet due to the volume of mail. You can always inform me of your membership requests; if you get an acknowledgement, we received your donation.
- 3) **I gave money in November. That was my 2007 donation.** Our membership cycle is calendar based and runs from January to December. If you intended for a November donation to count as your renewal, please contact me so I can note your membership record properly and prevent further renewal notices.

Please note our new address as of July 1:
1212 New York Avenue, NW
Seventh Floor
Washington, DC 20005

A (Brief) History of Hate Crimes Laws

Civil Rights Era Legislation Must be Updated to Cover All Americans

By **Preetmohan Singh**,
Deputy Director of Public Policy
psingh@interfaithalliance.org

Our laws reflect our values. A strong message about American values was sent in 1968 when the current federal hate crimes law was enacted during the civil rights era. Our hate crimes law needs to be updated to eliminate unnecessary obstacles to federal involvement and to cover all affected groups. The recently introduced Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (LLEHCPA—H.R. 1592 in the House, S. 1105 in the Senate) makes those legislative fixes.

Current law permits the involvement of federal law enforcement in investigating or prosecuting a hate crime only if the hate crime

was motivated by bias based on race, color, religion, or national origin and the assailant intended to prevent the victim from exercising a “federally protected right,” such as the right to vote or attend school. Because the crime has to meet both requirements, these criteria substantially limit the likelihood of federal prosecution of hate crimes, even when the crime is particularly heinous and local law enforcement is unable or unwilling to prosecute it. The LLEHCPA would enhance the federal response to hate crime violence by covering all violent crimes based on race, color, religion, or national origin.

In addition, the LLEHCPA would permit federal involvement in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes based on the victim’s gender, sexual orientation, or disability. This expansion is critical in order to protect members of these groups from this most egregious form of discrimination.

The special attention that these crimes require can stretch local law enforcement officials beyond their capacity. For example, the costly investigation of Matthew Shepard’s murder in Wyoming—totaling over \$150,000—forced the local sheriff’s depart-



Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper joins with the Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy and other speakers at The Interfaith Alliance’s rally at City Hall.

ment to reduce its staff. Changes in federal policy could give local law enforcement the help they need to more effectively investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

Religious and democratic values call for equal protection for all people in all places. National hate crimes legislation will help ensure equal protection under the law for all Americans. 

ACTION ALERT

E-mail your senators today.

Urge them to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Bill, S. 1105:

www.interfaithalliance.org/hatecrimes

Legislate Against Hate

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dozen diverse, national religious organizations, including Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Muslims, and many others, to support this legislation. We are also enlisting diverse clergy to support this legislation at www.clergyagainsthate.org. Please encourage religious leaders in your community to sign this online petition.

Unfortunately, religion continues to be misused as a tool to advance hate. At TIA, we are working tirelessly to ensure that every American enjoys the strongest possible guarantee of freedom from attacks motivated by bigotry. Please continue to respond to our action alerts, speak to your members of Congress, and tell them to “Legislate Against Hate by ‘08!” 

The Head Start Program Passes Congress WITHOUT Religious Discrimination

By **Kim Baldwin**,
Director of Public Policy and Voter Education
kbaldwin@interfaithalliance.org

The Interfaith Alliance commends the House and Senate for rejecting a last-minute legislative maneuver that would have unconstitutionally politicized the Head Start early education program by allowing providers to commit religious discrimination—with taxpayer dollars—in choosing teachers and volunteers. The legislative maneuver in the House, called a “Motion to Recommit,” was offered during the final floor consideration of the bill and was defeated by a 195-222 vote.

This “clean bill” (H.R. 1429) is a positive step towards safeguarding this vital and historic government program. TIA has consistently lobbied against allowing public funds to subsidize Head Start providers that fire or refuse to hire qualified teachers and volunteers solely because they are of a different faith tradition.

The Senate, in late June, passed the Head Start reauthorization by unanimous consent without any of the amendments sought by the religious right. The legislation now goes to conference to reconcile differences in the House and Senate bills and then on to the president. We urge the president to sign this important legislation. 

2007 NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GATHERING

NLG Reenergizes the Fight for Religious Freedom

By **Don Parker**,
Senior Writer and Editor
dparker@interfaithalliance.org

The 2007 National Leadership Gathering in Denver, May 3-6, was a huge success with nearly 200 activists coming from as far away as Hawaii and the East Coast. An outstanding and diverse group of speakers and workshop leaders spurred members and new friends of The Interfaith Alliance to reenergize the fight for religious freedom, explore new ideas, renew friendships, and build new coalitions for ongoing and future initiatives.

On Thursday afternoon, the Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy kicked off a rally on the steps of Denver's city hall to "Legislate Against Hate by '08". The rally was keynoted by Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper. Dr. Gaddy announced to the crowd that earlier that day, the United States House of Representatives had passed a major hate crimes bill (see page one) and urged the Senate to pass the bill and the president to sign it into law.

Hosted by The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado and Senator Maureen McCormack, the four days of NLG included addresses by Colorado Governor Bill Ritter; the Rev. Dr. Amos C. Brown from San Francisco; TIA Board Chair Rabbi Jack Moline; the Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar, head of the National Council of Churches USA; and the Rev. Dr. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

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Rabbi Jack Moline, left, board chair of The Interfaith Alliance, and Preet Singh, TIA's deputy director of policy, lead a discussion at one of the 33 workshops at the 2007 National Leadership Gathering.



Sarah Akhtar, left, and Darrow Pierce address activists at NLG, telling how, as a Muslim and a Jew, they met at the 2006 inaugural LEADD camp in North Carolina. Inspired by the camp, and with the help of a Methodist friend and fellow LEADD alum, they founded an interfaith group of high school students in their hometown, Fresno, California.



During a break at NLG, (l-r) Denny and Jerry Davidoff talk with a Colorado high school activist and Janice Marie Johnson, a workshop leader. A former TIA board chair, Denny is the director of TIA's LEADD camp.



Religious freedom activists from across the nation listen as Dr. Gaddy urges renewed action on a wide range of issues at the intersection of religion and politics in American public life.



TIA Board Chair Rabbi Jack Moline, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, and the Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, TIA president (l-r), talk before the governor addresses the 2007 National Leadership Gathering.



At the 2007 National Leadership Gathering, Dr. Welton Gaddy announced that Jay Keller, right, has joined The Interfaith Alliance staff as national field director. Jay served for 17 years as national field director of Population Connection, an education and advocacy organization aimed at achieving sustainable world population growth. He started his field career as an organizer for Common Cause.



At the 2007 NLG, The Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma received the Bishop P. Francis Murphy Memorial Local Activism Award, honoring the local alliance's outstanding interfaith work for many years. The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester and The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho were also honored as finalists for the award. Above, (l-r) the Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich, board chair of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation; Marvin Chiles, TIA board member and one of the leaders of the Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma; The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, president of TIA and TIAF; and Rabbi Jack Moline, board chair of The Interfaith Alliance.



Janice Marie Johnson, director of Lifespan Religious Education at The Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist, leads a workshop on conflict resolution at the NLG.



Kamal Abu-Shamsieh, Sarah Akhtar, and Darrow Pierce lead a workshop in Interfaith Organizing in High Schools.

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On Saturday, Dr. Gaddy's passionate and moving "Preaching to the Choir" brought perspective to the cause and this critical time in American history.

Thirty-three workshops covered a wide range of topics, including how to start a local alliance, skills-building for activist groups, fundraising, using new technology, lobbying state legislatures, working with the news media, sexual justice as a religious issue, facilitating interfaith dialogue, faith-based initiatives and the criminal justice system, and preserving the independence and integrity of courts. For more information: www.interfaithalliance.org/nlg. 

Party with a Purpose First Freedom First introduces hottest summer trend since the backyard barbeque.

By **Eric Shutt**,
First Freedom First Project Manager
eshutt@interfaithalliance.org



Are you looking for a way to celebrate America's religious freedom this summer? At The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, we're celebrating in style, nationwide.

Over the past year, we've worked with Americans United for Separation of Church and State to make First Freedom First so cool that summer heat just breezes by. We put First Freedom First in movie theaters and sent *Go-Card* post cards to hotspots in more than a dozen cities across America. We've gotten support from celebrities like Phil Donahue and political cartoonist Mike Keefe—not to mention Walter Cronkite.



Safeguarding separation
of church and state,
protecting religious liberty

But as global climate change makes the weather as unpredictable as the intersection of religion and politics, this summer, we'll need your help — party style.

We're asking people who support the separation of religion and government to bring First Freedom First to their friends and neighbors with a good, old-fashioned house party.

Featuring First Freedom First at your backyard barbeque can be as easy as passing around some stickers or buttons to wear when you head out for the parade. Or you can go big and make it a real celebration of religious liberty—our First Freedom. It's up to you.

We'll send you everything you'll need to tell people about First Freedom First—stickers, buttons, brochures, and petitions. And it's all free. All you need to do is ask.

If you'd like, after your event, you'll be able to get pictures from your party posted on a new upcoming section of the First Freedom First Web site highlighting all of the great things people like you are doing for First Freedom First in their local communities.

To host a house party or for more information, please contact Eric Shutt, at eshutt@interfaithalliance.org or 800.510.0969. 

The Interfaith Alliance's Voter Education Program

By **Anne Sclater**,
Deputy Director of Voter Education
asclater@interfaithalliance.org

The 2008 presidential election—already well under way in the first half of 2007—is shaping up to be a showcase for the issues addressed in The Interfaith Alliance's *One Nation, Many Faiths*.

VOTE 2008 program.

Religious frame-works have been used

to discuss a variety of political

issues, from the war in Iraq to the budget to the environment. No candidate has yet emerged as the clear favorite of the religious right, but some critics have focused on faith as a measure of a candidate. Candidates have been asked over and over again to detail and justify publicly a personal religious faith and practice.

One Nation, Many Faiths.
VOTE 2008

The intensity and virulence of the public conversation reinforce the need for TIA's election-related campaign to educate Americans about the proper role religion should play in elections. The Constitution and federal tax laws prohibit tax-exempt religious organizations from engaging in partisan politics. TIA further believes

that mixing religion and government ultimately harms both.

Last year's popular printed guides—one for candidates and one for houses of worship—are being updated for 2008. In addition, plans are underway for a more comprehensive internet Web presence for the *VOTE 2008* program. The flexibility of Web publishing will make it easy for TIA to provide updated information about IRS rulings and other fast-changing election-related information.

Mixing of religion and politics happens not only at the national electoral level, but also in state and local races. Although the Democratic and Republican nominations for president will be decided earlier than ever in 2008, the shorter political season doesn't usually begin in earnest until late summer or even Labor Day of an election year, so we expect another wave of public conversation about our issues to happen in mid-to-late 2008.

Though TIA's national staff lacks the manpower to follow every state and local race, we do hope to use this election year to establish an important dialogue with our members across the country. Look for more communications from us in upcoming months about how you can monitor political races in your area and let us know about inappropriate interactions between candidates and religious communities. 

Three Great Ways to Support The Interfaith Alliance

By **Julianne Simitz**,
Deputy Director of Development
jsimitz@interfaithalliance.org

We could not protect religious liberty and the separation of government and religion without your financial contributions. Here are a few options for supporting our work.

#1 Take Up the Torch... Torchbearers are a very special group of members who make automatic monthly payments on their debit card or credit card or through their checking account (EFT) to support our work. As a Torchbearer, you control how much you contribute and when to begin and end your monthly donations. Plus, you'll never have to worry about renewing your



Dr. Lo Sprague, left, and the Rev. Dr. Gwynne Guibord, former board chair of The Interfaith Alliance, helped launch the Walter Cronkite Legacy Society with a generous bequest, announced at the annual Walter Cronkite Faith & Freedom Award Gala in New York City in 2005.

membership or keeping track of when you last sent a gift by mail. And because these reliable funds sustain our work throughout the fiscal year, you can rest assured that your secure monthly gifts make our programs to protect religious freedom and to challenge religious political extremism stronger and more effective. To sign up or learn more, please e-mail monthlygiving@interfaithalliance.org, or call 800.856.0277 today.

#2 Upgrade to the Faith & Freedom Society... A distinguished group of our most dedicated supporters, Faith & Freedom Society members provide the extraordinary support that helps us educate members of Congress and all Americans on our religious freedoms. Faith & Freedom Society members make annual gifts of \$500 or more. For a list of benefits and different levels of support, please visit www.interfaithalliance.org.

#3 Leave a Legacy... In 2005, former TIA Board Chair Rev. Dr. Gwynne Guibord and her partner, Dr. Lo Sprague (left), made the first, and very generous, bequest of \$100,000 to The Interfaith Alliance Foundation. Since then, the Walter Cronkite Legacy Society has continued to grow and thrive. We accept restricted and unre-

stricted gifts of a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your estate; the remainder of your estate after all debts, expenses, taxes, and other bequests have been made; or a contingent bequest if one or more of your beneficiaries does not survive you. Your bequest may include cash, stocks, bonds, life insurance policies, or other planned gift arrangements. For more information on the Walter Cronkite Legacy Society, please contact plannedgiving@interfaithalliance.org, or call Julianne Simitz, deputy director of development, at 800.510.0969. 

NO MATTER HOW YOU CHOOSE TO CONTRIBUTE, YOUR SUPPORT HELPS OUR WORK...

- Promoting interfaith dialogue and civic participation through *One Nation, Many Faiths. VOTE 2008* election-year initiatives, community leadership programs, and educational forums
- Organizing, lobbying, and coalition-building to help defend against the radical right's assaults on First Amendment freedoms
- Launching media outreach and public awareness campaigns to expose legislation that attempts, under the guise of religion, to divide Americans

Calling High School Students for LEADD Camp 2007

By **Denise Davidoff**,
 Director of LEADD
ddavidoff@interfaithalliance.org

The Interfaith Alliance Foundation invites high school sophomores and juniors to apply for the second annual LEADD Camp (Leadership Education Advancing Democracy and Diversity), which runs from August 5-12 at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reistertown, Maryland. Last year's inaugural "LEADDERs" said the camp was a life-changing experience. An academic assessment team from the University of Georgia judged the first camp a great success.

"We did so many things together, like the trust walk last night or the power of the mountain and the low ropes," one student said. "We're a group of 30 really diverse kids from all around the country, [who] came together because of the things we did."

LEADD teaches students how to become informed and engaged citizens, successfully advocating for religious freedom. We intentionally choose our student campers to ensure the camp is radically diverse in terms of faith traditions, geography, and economic conditions. LEADDERs come together to experience pluralism, share information, teach and be taught, and have fun in a safe and nurturing environment that encourages openness and builds confidence.

Another student said, "I feel that I have a lot more power and support behind me. I



want to be more involved than I used to be, and that's a big deal. I'm really thankful for LEADD giving me this."

LEADD faculty members are college and high school teachers, supplemented by staff from The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, whose specialties are public policy, advocacy, messaging, and communications. Experienced camp counselors chaperone activities and oversee the nonacademic side of LEADD, from campfires to volleyball and other outdoor adventures.

This summer, LEADDERs will take a one-day field trip to nearby Washington, DC, to visit the Jefferson Memorial, National

Archives, and Smithsonian Institution. They will also tour the Capitol and meet with congressional staff members to learn about lobbying and advocacy firsthand.

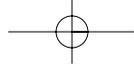
"I've always wanted to be active, but I never thought that just one person could influence so many others," another LEADDER said.

Rising high school sophomores and juniors from all religious traditions, as well as any who are not religious, are encouraged to apply.

To apply for the 2007 LEADD program, go online at www.WeLEADD.org, or call 800.510.0969. 



Log onto www.weLEADD.org Today!



Please Note Our New Address:

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to newsletter@interfaithalliance.org.

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One Nation, Many Faiths ★ www.interfaithalliance.org

**Interfaith Alliance Activists
Rally for Hate Crimes Bill
at Denver's City Hall**

