

AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

HUMANISTS OF THE YEAR

2016 Jared Diamond
2015 Lawrence Krauss
2014 Barney Frank
2013 Dan Savage
2012 Gloria Steinem
2011 Rebecca Goldstein
2010 Bill Nye
2009 P.Z. Myers
2008 Pete Stark
2007 Joyce Carol Oates
2006 Steven Pinker
2005 Murray Gell-Mann
2004 Daniel C. Dennett
2003 Sherwin T. Wine
2002 Steven Weinberg
2001 Stephen Jay Gould
2000 William F. Schulz
1999 Edward O. Wilson
1998 Barbara Ehrenreich
1997 Alice Walker
1996 Richard Dawkins
1995 Ashley Montagu
1994 Mary Morain
1993 Richard D. Lamm
1992 Kurt Vonnegut
1991 Lester R. Brown
1990 Ted Turner
1989 Gerald A. Larue
1988 Leo Pfeffer
1987 Margaret Atwood
1986 Faye Wattleton
1985 John Kenneth Galbraith
1984 Isaac Asimov
1983 Lester A. Kirkendall
1982 Helen Caldicott
1981 Carl Sagan
1980 Andrei Sakharov
1979 Edwin H. Wilson
1978 Margaret E. Kuhn
1977 Corliss Lamont
1976 Jonas Salk
1975 Betty Friedan
1974 Henry Morgenthau
1973 Thomas Szasz
1972 B. F. Skinner
1971 Albert Ellis
1970 A. Philip Randolph
1969 R. Buckminster Fuller
1968 Benjamin Spock
1967 Abraham H. Maslow
1966 Erich Fromm
1965 Hudson Hoagland
1964 Carl Rogers
1963 Hermann J. Muller
1962 Sir Julian Huxley
1961 Linus Pauling
1960 Leo Szilard
1959 George Brock Chisholm
1958 Oscar Riddle
1957 Margaret Sanger
1956 C. Judson Herrick
1955 James P. Warbasse
1954 Arthur F. Bentley
1953 Anton J. Carlson

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Roy Speckhardt

January 18, 2017

Representative Jodey Arrington
1029 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Arrington,

Congratulations on your victory in the 2016 elections! As the new congressional session gets underway, I feel compelled to inform you about an organization within Congress that often supports legislation that weakens the separation of church and state and discriminates against LGBTQ and non-religious Americans.


The organization I refer to is the Congressional Prayer Caucus (CPC), an official caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives, which includes over 90 members of Congress. The purposes of the CPC are "to 1) recognize the vital role that prayer by individuals of all faiths has played in uniting us as a people and in making us a more generous, more cooperative, and more forgiving people than we might otherwise have been; 2) collect, exchange, and disseminate information about prayer as a fundamental and enduring feature of American life; 3) use the legislative process—both through sponsorship of affirmative legislation and through opposition to detrimental legislation—to assist the nation and its people in continuing to draw upon and benefit from this essential source of our strength and well-being."

Unfortunately, members of the CPC have repeatedly introduced and supported legislation that we believe is unconstitutional, discriminates against LGBTQ Americans, and favors religious institutions and individuals over non-religious institutions and individuals. The CPC is also one of the leading advocates for opening and closing each session of Congress with a prayer, which relegates non-religious Americans and others who don't pray to the status of second-class citizens. Prayer is important to many Americans, and they should feel secure in their freedom to practice their beliefs. However, when public officials and Congress explicitly endorse public prayer, they alienate millions of non-religious Americans who oppose the joining of religion and government.

It is for this reason that I ask you not to join the CPC and to actively work to ensure that the wall of separation between church and state is strengthened and maintained.

I thank you for your consideration, and I wish you a successful and productive term as a representative of the American people.

Sincerely,


Roy Speckhardt
Executive Director

1777 T Street NW, Washington DC 20009-7125 | T 800.837.3792 202.238.9088 | F 202.238.9003
aha@americanhumanist.org | www.americanhumanist.org



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January 18, 2017

Representative Jodey Arrington
1029 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Arrington,

Congratulations on your victory in the 2016 elections! As you prepare to represent your constituents in the 115th Congress, I would like to provide you with a free copy of *A Jefferson Bible for the Twenty-First Century*.

In the first half of the twentieth century, all members of Congress were automatically supplied with a copy of the Jefferson Bible. We are renewing that tradition, though not at public expense.

The original Jefferson Bible, faithfully reproduced here, was compiled by President Thomas Jefferson two hundred years ago by literally cutting and pasting Gospel passages to present Jesus as a wise, human philosopher. The sections that he cut, mainly supernatural tales of miracles such as the virgin birth, resurrection after death, etc., have been removed in our version, and a similar treatment has been given to the Hebrew Bible, the Qur'an, the Bhagavadgîtâ, the Buddhist sutras, and the Book of Mormon, which are included in our book. In addition, we have also included our own humanist statement of principles for you to consider.

When Jefferson created his version of the Bible, nearly all literate Americans were Christian. Today, Americans have a much wider diversity of religious belief, including a fourth of us who have no religious affiliation at all. By reading about the perspectives of the diverse religious and nontheistic communities that are proud to call themselves Americans, we hope you will be able to better understand their interests and beliefs. We also hope that this knowledge of America's religious diversity will inspire you not to act to the specific advantage or disadvantage of any of these valuable communities by introducing or supporting discriminatory legislation which privileges any one specific religious community.

As you go about your important work in the 115th Congress, we hope you will be able to draw on the wisdom of the world's most important religious and non-religious writings, and champion the concept of religious freedom for all which has made our country so great.

Sincerely,



Roy Speckhardt
Executive Director

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