



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Office of the Assistant Secretary, Suite 600
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

JUL 12 2007

Ms. Julie Sternberg
Senior Staff Attorney
American Civil Liberties Union
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
New York, New York 10004-2400

Dear Ms. Sternberg:

Secretary Leavitt has asked me to thank you for your letter regarding your concerns over the possible misuse of Federal funds by organizations that receive Abstinence Education grants, and to respond to you directly. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) provided guidance on February 20, 2007, to Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) grantees that implement separate religious programming. We encourage you to review this Information Memorandum at our website <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/abstinence/index.htm#sub1>.

You expressed concern that proselytization is an essential component of the *Stop and Think* program. The *Stop and Think* program was developed by the Lane Pregnancy Support Center in Eugene, Oregon. ACF conducted a site visit there on May 17-18, 2006. We reviewed the curriculum and all aspects of the program and did not observe any Federally funded materials or activities that were inherently religious. The *Stop and Think* program referenced in your letter and supporting documents was not developed using Federal funds and the Lane Pregnancy Support Center no longer sells curriculum at all. Since the site visit, Lane Pregnancy Support Center has also required all abstinence education program staff to sign a statement of understanding that they may not proselytize while working with any Federally funded program.

You also expressed concern that the Northern Hills Pregnancy Care Center used Federal dollars for religiously based purity balls. In following up with this organization, ACF has learned that Federal dollars were used for a father-daughter event that did not include any religious content. Following the ball a separate event was held that had a religious focus. While Northern Hills Pregnancy Care Center took steps to separate these programs, the separation between the two events could in the future be strengthened. After consulting with ACF, this grantee has voluntarily committed to implement specific improvements that will assure full separation of its Federally funded abstinence program from any inherently religious activities. ACF will continue to monitor this grantee to ensure that their Federally funded abstinence education activities are clearly distinct from their inherently religious activities.

The Lane Pregnancy Support Center and the Northern Hills Pregnancy Care Center have been provided with the same guidance and instruction as all other CBAE grantees. We include a statement with grant award documents that grantees must comply with Title 45 Part 87 of the Code of Federal Regulations and must not expend Federal funds for sectarian instruction,

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worship, prayer or proselytization. ACF has reinforced this training with presentations by the Office of General Counsel at our annual grantees' conferences. And as indicated above, we have provided an Information Memorandum as written guidance to all grantees to inform them about important strategies for assuring that privately funded, religiously based programs must be separated by time or location from Federally funded abstinence education programs.

I hope this information is helpful to you. ACF remains committed to the proper use of Federal funds. I also will provide this response to Ms. Jann Carson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Schneider', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel C. Schneider
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families