



# Ethical Action Report



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## **Reproductive Health:** Support Affordable Access to Contraception

Take a stand for reproductive health. Write to your lawmakers and ask them to cosponsor the Prevention Through Affordable Access Act, which will make birth control easier to afford for low-income women.

### BACKGROUND

A bureaucratic error has made prescription birth-control prohibitively expensive for low-income women. In the past, university health centers and family-planning clinics were able to purchase birth control from drug companies at a reduced price, which they could then sell to students and low-income women at a minimal cost. However, a technical mistake in the Deficit Reduction Act accidentally eliminated this drug discount, making birth control difficult to afford for many women: birth control that previously cost approximately five dollars for a month supply now costs nearly fifty dollars per pack—ten times the previous cost.

However, Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-NY) has recently introduced the Prevention Through Affordable Access Act, bipartisan legislation that would fix the technical error and restore access to discount birth control for college health clinics and family planning centers at absolutely no cost to taxpayers.

This is common sense legislation that is good for women. The best way to prevent unintended pregnancy and abortion is through widely-accessible and affordable birth control. Please ask Congress to fix the birth control pricing crisis by cosponsoring the Prevention Through Affordable Access Act.

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## **Freedom of Ideas: Support “The Golden Compass”**

“The Golden Compass,” a new blockbuster Humanist movie, will hit theaters December 7, but not without its share of controversy. Be on the alert for local protests from critics who are unfairly portraying the film as a "stealth campaign" by its "deceitful" producers and author Philip Pullman to "promote atheism and denigrate Christianity." And be ready to launch counter protests if you are so moved.

### **BACKGROUND**

“The Golden Compass” is the first installment of a book trilogy that has recently been adapted for the screen. The trilogy, titled “His Dark Materials” reflects the Humanist values of author Philip Pullman, such as opposition to tyranny, love and kindness, and courage and intellectual curiosity. Pullman—who works with the British Humanist Association and will receive the 2008 International Humanist Award at the World Humanist Congress this June in Washington DC—trusts his readers to see this in all his books.

Unfortunately, Pullman's critics don't have the same faith in people to make their own decisions.

The Catholic League launched a campaign against the film leading up to its premiere, complete with an "educational booklet" entitled, “The Golden Compass: Agenda Unmasked,” described as "all the ammo [Christians] need to convince friends and family members that there is nothing innocent about Pullman's agenda."

For the Catholic League and other opponents of the film, being critical of religion or being atheist is analogous to being immoral.

We know that that just isn't true. It's important to be on the lookout for these kinds of campaigns and protests in your community. Be ready to show support for Pullman and his Humanist work. And be sure to see the movie and read the books to decide for yourself.

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## **Civil Liberties: Support Reforms to the REAL ID Act**

The REAL ID Act is bad policy that is bad for our country. However S. 717, the “Identification Security Enhancement Act of 2007,” would reform the flawed REAL ID Act. Please urge your Senators to cosponsor S. 717.

### **BACKGROUND**

The REAL ID Act of 2005 is a federal law that would turn Americans’ driver’s licenses into national identity cards. Slipped through by Congress in a “must-pass” Iraq War/Tsunami relief supplemental bill, the Act was passed with little-to-no consideration or debate, not even receiving a single hearing in the Senate.

Turning driver’s licenses into a form of national identity documents would have a harmful impact on the privacy of U.S. citizens, turning our nation into a surveillance society. Moreover, the administrative burdens and expenses to the state would be vast: individuals could expect higher fees, longer lines, and other bureaucratic nightmares. And yet the REAL ID act wouldn’t increase security against terrorism. From civil liberties organizations to conservative groups agree: the REAL ID Act must be stopped.

Thankfully, Senators Daniel Akaka of Hawaii and John Sununu of New Hampshire have introduced S. 717, the “Identification Security Enhancement Act of 2007,” which would reform the flawed REAL ID bill, providing protections for civil liberties and re-establishing privacy safeguards.

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## **Free Speech: Stop FCC Censorship**

Take a stand against censorship! Write to your Senators and urge them to vote no on S. 1780, a bill that would let the Federal Communications Commission ban profanity and “fleeting expletives” between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

### **BACKGROUND**

Congress and the FCC are attempting to curtail free speech on the public airwaves with a new Senate bill that would allow the FCC to ban so-called fleeting expletives on broadcast television from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The government claims that fleeting expletives are causing harm to the nation, despite having no evidence that this is the case. What *does* cause the nation harm is governmental censorship of speech. Similar FCC censorship has been found unconstitutional by federal courts. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit recently rejected FCC policy, finding it arbitrary and without foundation.

Moreover, the FCC has never defined what is or isn’t profane, rather effectively saying they know it when they hear it. Thus, such programs as Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl” and Ken Burns’ documentary “The War” could easily be targeted as profane.

The FCC needs to stop playing parent and stay out of our living rooms.

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