

almost all of it just in the last few years, and that 70 million acres does not even count what we have in the national parks, in the national forests and all of that.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not wake up and realize that we are slowly, very slowly doing away with private property in this country, we are about to lose a very important element of our freedom and our prosperity, and we are about to lose the freedom that this man fought for and supported all of those years and why so many people have given their lives for this country and in defense of that flag. I am very pleased that this Miss Jacobsen realized that and wrote such a moving column in Newsweek. I just wanted to call that to the attention of my colleagues tonight.

SAY NO TO H.R. 7, PRESIDENT'S FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow this House will vote on H.R. 7, the President's faith-based initiative.

The question before the House is not whether faith is a powerful force; it is. The question is not whether faith-based groups do good works; they do. The question is not even whether government can assist faith-based groups in their social work. The government does and has so for years.

Rather, the vote on this bill boils down to two fundamental questions. First, do we want American citizens' tax dollars directly funding churches and houses of worship, as this bill does; and, second, is it right to discriminate in job hiring when using Federal dollars.

I would suggest the answer to both of those questions is no, emphatically so.

The question of using tax dollars to fund churches is not a new one. It was debated at length by our Founding Fathers over two centuries ago. They not only said no to that idea; they felt so strongly about it that they embedded the principle of church-State separation into the first 16 words of the Bill of Rights by keeping government funding and regulations out of our churches for over 200 years.

Mr. Speaker, America has become the envy of the world when it comes to religious freedom, tolerance, and vitality. I challenge the proponents of this bill to show me tomorrow one nation in the world, one nation where government funding of churches has resulted in more religious liberty or tolerance or vitality than right here in the United States. All of human history proves that government involvement in religion harms religion, not helps it.

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Our Founding Fathers understood that fact, and today's world proves

that fact. Just look around. In China, citizens are in prison for their religious beliefs. In the Middle East, religious differences have perpetrated conflict and death. In Afghanistan, religious minorities are being branded with Nazi-like tactics. In Europe, government-funding of churches has led to low church attendance.

As a person of faith, I thank God that our Founding Fathers understood that religious liberty is best preserved by keeping government funding and regulations out of our churches.

To my conservative colleagues, and to those across this country, I would suggest that they should be the first to fear the government regulation of religion that would inevitably result from billions of taxpayer dollars going directly to our churches and houses of worship.

Surely it was one significant reason why over 1,000 religious leaders, from Baptists to Jews to Methodists, have signed petitions opposing H.R. 7. These people of faith understand that direct Federal funding of our churches would not only be unconstitutional, it would result in government regulation, audits, and yes, even prosecutions against our churches and religious leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I have great personal respect for President Bush, but on the question of Federal funding using tax dollars to fund our churches, I must stand with Madison, Jefferson, and the Bill of Rights. The principle of church-State separation has protected Americans' religious freedom magnificently for over 200 years. We tamper with that sacred principle at our own peril.

Mr. Speaker, now let me address a second question I raised regarding this legislation: Is it right to discriminate in job hiring when using Federal tax dollars for those jobs? I believe the vast majority of Americans would say no.

Under H.R. 7, citizens could be denied or fired from federally-funded jobs because of no other reason than their personal religious faith. I would suggest that having the government subsidize religious job discrimination would be a huge step backwards in our march for civil rights.

No American citizen, not one, should have to pass anyone else's religious test in order to qualify for a federally-funded tax-supported job.

Under H.R. 7, a church associated with Bob Jones University could put out a sign "Paid for by taxpayers. No Catholics need apply here for a federally-funded job." That is wrong.

Under H.R. 7, federally-funded jobs could be denied to otherwise qualified workers simply because of their personal faith being different from that of their employers. That is wrong.

Under H.R. 7, churches that believe women should not work which use Federal dollars could put out a sign saying, "No women need apply here for a federally-funded job." That is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, we all understand why churches, synagogues, and mosques could hire people for their own religious faith with their own private dollars. But it is altogether different, altogether different as night to day to allow tax dollars to be used to subsidize job discrimination for secular jobs.

There is also something ironic about a bill that is supposedly designed to stop religious discrimination but actually ends up not only allowing but subsidizing religious discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, this is also a bill built on a false foundation, the premise that not sending tax dollars to our churches and houses of worship is somehow discrimination against religion.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In the Bill of Rights, our Founding Fathers wisely built this sacred wall of separation to protect religion from government and politicians. This bill would obliterate that wall and ultimately put at risk our religious liberty, the crown jewel of America's experiment in democracy.

To Members who genuinely want to help religious charities do good work, I would say that present law already allows Federal funding of faith-based groups if they agree not to proselytize with those Federal dollars or to discriminate with Federal funds. This bill is thus a solution in search of a problem.

Should we have Federal funding of our churches? The answer is no. Should we discriminate in job hiring based on religion when using Federal dollars? The answer is no.

And if Members' answers to these two questions is no as well, they should vote no on H.R. 7. Protecting our churches from government regulation and our citizens from religious discrimination are fundamental principles. They deserve our support today, tomorrow, and every day.

By voting no on H.R. 7, we in this House can defend the principles embedded in the Bill of Rights that have protected our religious freedom so magnificently well for over two centuries.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE FOR H.R. 2356, THE BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT OF 2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, House Rule XIII 3(c)(2) requires that a cost estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office be filed with a committee report. When the committee report for H.R. 2356 was filed, this cost estimate was not yet available.

Attached for inclusion in the RECORD is the completed cost estimate.