



BILL HORN

**SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: September 28, 2004

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT H.R. 4909 (REP. MARK GREEN R-WI), THE *TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES ACT*** (District: 5)

SUMMARY:

Overview

Most Americans agree that government could be doing a far better job working with faith-based and community organizations. These groups have been fighting many of the social ills that plague our communities, and they've been doing it with virtually no help from government.

In 2001, under an Executive Order, President George W. Bush established a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (White House OFBCI) within the Executive Office of the President.

In his 2004 State of the Union Address, President Bush called on Congress to codify the principle of equal treatment for faith-based organizations in the Federal grants process, putting an end to discrimination against these charities. This legislation would ensure that more Americans in need would be able to get vital social services from the country's most effective charities, whether they are secular or faith-based organizations.

H.R. 4909, a bi-partisan proposal, would permanently establish the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR HORN:

1. Support H.R. 4909.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for the Chair's signature to the San Diego County Congressional Delegation that expresses the County's strong support for H.R. 4909

Fiscal Impact

None

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Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

In 2001, the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services funded a pilot model, "The San Diego Faith-Based Initiative." The purpose of funding this Initiative was to develop a partnership model that would result in a united faith community helping to create stronger families, healthier children and united communities.

Since then, San Diego's Faith-Based Initiative has established contact with nearly 1,200 faith-based institutions, engaged nearly 300 faith-based institutions as Initiative partners, mobilized more than 3,100 volunteers from the faith community to work on special projects, developed 137 new foster homes, provided resources and care to more than 1,600 individuals and families, and developed 20 new Adopt-a-School partnerships between Faith-Based organizations and schools (and another 40 schools are on waiting lists to be adopted).

In 2003, at Supervisor Horn's recommendation, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Officer to explore the possibility of receiving federal funds to support faith-based initiatives and partnerships. Since the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives is not yet permanent and has not been funded, it has been determined that there essentially is no specific funding for faith-based initiatives. Passage of HR 4909 would carry considerable weight and clear the way for Congress to fund this important initiative.

Faith-based Initiatives are becoming the fabric of our communities. In North County, Fifth District Community Enhancement Funds have been used to hire a grant writer whose sole focus is to secure money for faith-based groups. Since April of 2004, 15 grant proposals have been sent out. By collaborating with Community Based Organizations in the business of providing social services, the Faith Community can receive funding for ancillary services. Faith-Based services are an important component for providers of social services. This has been historically proven again and again through the success of essentially faith-based programs such as the well-known and highly successful 12-step recovery programs.

Supervisor Horn and the Health and Human Services Agency will be hosting a North County Faith-Based Initiative Forum on October 7, 2004 at the North Coastal HHSA facility. It will bring Community Based and Faith-Based organizations together to further explore ways for these organizations to work together. Each group of participants will propose projects for working together and grant proposals will be developed to apply for funding for these projects.

We have seen the power of people in the faith community to change and improve lives. President Bush said, "We should not focus on the process; we ought to focus on the results." He also said, "If you're able to show that you're successful at meeting social objectives, then you ought to be allowed to access the money."

H.R. 4909 is a bi-partisan effort aimed at eliminating unnecessary legislative and regulatory barriers that impede the efforts of faith-based and community initiatives to solve social problems.

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It has been referred to the House Committee on Government Reform, which has not yet scheduled hearings on the legislation. Support for H.R. 4909 underscores this Board's recognition of the success of faith-based initiatives in San Diego County and their relevance to the County's provision of social and health care-related services.

Respectfully submitted,

BILL HORN
Supervisor, Fifth District

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