



Catholic Campaign for Human Development

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Response to Recent Attacks on CCHD

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) has been repeatedly attacked by Judie Brown, Michael Hichborn and the American Life League (ALL) for several years. They allege that CCHD funds many organizations that take actions in conflict with Catholic teaching. In the past, they also have unfairly attacked CCHD and USCCB leadership.

A recent letter to bishops from ALL gave a preview of a new attack. All these recycled charges have been already reviewed, some several times. CCHD has carefully assessed these past charges and reported the results to the CCHD Subcommittee and the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. In one instance, ALL helped uncover violations of CCHD guidelines which led to termination of grants to that group. CCHD has expressed gratitude for this information and asked ALL to continue to communicate its specific concerns to CCHD. In the last year, CCHD staff has met four times for extended sessions with American Life League staff. One set of meetings outlined the process and results of the *CCHD Review and Renewal* and asked for their input. There were some helpful suggestions, some of which were incorporated into the *Renewal*. Other meetings were to share CCHD's mission, process and procedures and rationale for funding and to review and respond to the general and specific allegations from ALL. While some progress was made in these sessions, they usually ended with ALL disagreeing with the CCHD mission as set forth by the bishops and CCHD disagreeing with ALL's efforts to accuse groups of violating CCHD guidelines based on web searches and without any contact with the groups or dioceses.

Most Recent ALL Attacks

CCHD received from Archbishop Dolan a copy of the materials sent to him by ALL. These are not new accusations, but a repackaging of past charges already addressed by CCHD and discussed by the CCHD Subcommittee and reported to the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. Every one of these groups was approved by the local bishop and funded by the CCHD Subcommittee in the summer of 2010, more than a year ago. The funds were delayed so that CCHD and local dioceses could undertake additional research on the groups before the grants were dispersed. All this took place before the *CCHD Review and Renewal* was adopted.

It is important to note serious overall problems with the accusations of Hichborn and ALL. They rely almost exclusively on unverified web-based information and primarily on internet sites of organizations that are NOT funded by CCHD. These accusations are almost always made without contact with the CCHD funded groups or diocesan staff.

Review of the Latest ALL Attack

CCHD has examined each of the 54 groups cited in the ALL report to Archbishop Dolan regarding their participation in activity contrary to Catholic teaching. One group had after receiving CCHD funds violated the CCHD contract by distributing condoms in an anti-HIV program. That group was swiftly defunded in March 2011.

The other allegations are repetitions of previous accusations of improper relationships between CCHD funded groups and various national organizations and events. These concerns have been raised in the past, researched and reviewed by CCHD staff leadership and dioceses. Except for the one case cited above, CCHD has found that these groups did not violate CCHD requirements. Some of the allegations involve confusion about what “membership” or “partnership” means in the relationships between local groups and a particular national organization. In reviewing the allegations, CCHD found:

- Groups which work on legitimate issues were listed as “partners” or “members” of another organization which allegedly took actions in conflict with Catholic teaching. The CCHD funded group had never agreed to be a partner nor was a member of the other organization and had not participated in the development of an offending policy and was not even aware of the position that they were alleged to support. CCHD groups have asked that their names be removed and have protested the identification of their group with a policy that they had no role in developing, approving or advocating.
- Other allegations involve identification of CCHD funded groups with positions of a national organization where the position in conflict with Catholic teaching was the action of an individual staff member who acted without approval or authorization of the organization (for example, adding the organization’s name to material which appeared on the web.) This raises issues of accountability within the other organization (which CCHD does not fund), but does not involve CCHD funded groups in violation of our guidelines or contract.
- Other accusations involve several CCHD funded groups offering sessions on their good work at a large meeting of thousands of people and a thousand other workshops, including some workshops and other activities in conflict with Catholic teaching. In researching these allegations with local dioceses and groups, there was no evidence of CCHD funded groups supporting or participating in the objectionable workshops or activity, but rather they shared their own experiences on issues of common concern with the Catholic community and CCHD.
- Other accusations involved CCHD funded groups receiving funding from organizations that fund other activity that is contrary to Catholic teaching. These CCHD funded groups received the funding to further their legitimate work. In the application process to the other funding source, there was no commitment to, or even mention of, any objectionable activity.

In some instances, the materials cited in the allegations are outdated and do not reflect, for example, that a group asked to be removed from another organization's website because listing them misrepresented the nature of the relationship.

It is important to emphasize that in reviewing groups CCHD relies not only on its own efforts, but also the active participation and judgment of the local diocese. No group is ever funded without the explicit approval of the diocesan bishop where the group does its work. CCHD relies far more on the experience and judgment of the local bishop and diocese than on the accusations of those with a long record of attacking the USCCB and bishops to advance their own ideological and ecclesial agendas.

Catholics can be assured that CCHD, the Bishops' Subcommittee on Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and all the bishops who approve CCHD grants are working diligently and faithfully to insist that all CCHD funds are used in accord with Catholic teaching and advance CCHD's mission "to bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, new sight to the blind and set the downtrodden free." (Luke 4)