

The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

A Socratic society dedicated to the proposition that the fully examined life is well worth living.
Member organization of the [Humanists of Florida](#), the [AHA](#), [COR](#), and [CSH](#). Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

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Matters of Great Importance + our Annual Elections

Humanism is about if nothing else, making the crucial difference; pushing society towards that life of reason that provides the essential balance to the prevailing orthodoxies of ubiquitous conformity to ancient ritual and myth.

But in its necessary socially organized form, Humanism needs leaders. We need a strong Humanist movement to help humanity overcome its demonstrated potential for extinction borne of fear, hubris, ignorance, and indifference.

We are the people who struggle daily against the corrosive summons to just resign and join the "feel good" revolution. If we are to someday win the struggle to unleash the power of our species' potential for happiness and goodness, we must do the practical everyday things necessary to keep the generators running, and the current flowing. Do your part! Run for the board. Participate in committees. Help get us to the tipping point. Join us. Pay dues.

Then play 20 questions...

The burden of our main discussion will center around 20 questions. Twenty essential questions... 1. Who am I? 2. What kind of place is this? 3. When did I begin to "know"? 4. Where is the universe? 5. Why do we answer these questions? 6. Who is the person I could have been? 7. What is needed for a successful life? 8. When did history begin? 9. Where are we going? 10. Why should we be moral? 11. Is certainty possible? 12. How does one live a good life? 13. What makes good art? 14. Which political party has the best understanding of reality? 15. Of what should we be tolerant? 16. Where does empathy become unhelpful? 17. Or, does it? 18. Are we immortal? 19. What can be known? 20. What is the most important problem facing humankind?

Prizes will be awarded for what the group estimates are the best answers. This can be fun and rewarding. We hope you'll come.

Please support the Humanist Society



Don't Forget...

Tampa Bay Harvest Please...

bring as many boxed and canned food items
as you can to this meeting.

With the important help of Glenn Paul and

Tampa Bay Harvest, we can do our part to help relieve
significant human suffering in our area.

This year's goal: 1000 pounds. **It's the Humanist thing to do!**

Coordinator, Glenn Paul says that Tampa Bay Harvest food
deliveries in the past year - statistics -

TB Harvest delivered 2,765,517 pounds of food to 220 agencies
who feed the hungry in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties last
year. That's 5,531,000 meals to feed the hungry by TBH's
calculations.

**Please join us
for this free and
open discussion.**

**On Saturday,
April 2nd
at 2 PM:
Clearwater East
Library
2251 Drew St.
Clearwater**

Following our
meeting, many of us
will dine and argue
together at the

**Farmer Boy
Restaurant**
at 2129 Drew St. just 2
blocks west of
Library.

Volume 20 No. 4

April, 2011

*Join us in our effort to ignite
critical thinking, and embrace
reason, & compassion in life.*

~ Join or Renew ~

*The Humanist Society
of the Suncoast.*

👤 Trial - 3 month - free news

👤 Regular - \$25.

👤 Reg. Couple - \$30.

👤 Life - \$200.

👤 Life Couple - \$250.

👤 Associate - \$10.

Name: _____

Address -if new: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

Send to: Glenn Paul, Treasurer
Suncoast Humanist Society
2507 First St. #E
Indian Rocks Beach
33785-3010



Help Pakistan, Haiti, Chile, etc.
through secular charity.

**Now, Find the Humanist
Society on Facebook!**

Be a Friend!

Thanks to Bob Byrch!



Humanists work to build a world in which happiness is the enduring criterion of social policy.

What do Humanists Want?

1. To extend a human centered approach to the critical problems of life and society.
2. To encourage attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance and a loving generosity in human relationships, and in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others and encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture and experience.
3. To develop and popularize the skills of creative and critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition and irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.
4. To exalt those artistic and imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure and enlightenment, and which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, and other expressions, we embrace the essence of the human spirit.
5. To explore the grounds of ethics and morality within the unfolding history of our evolving culture. Such knowledge will enable us to become effective protagonists for the happiness of the individual person. JP

The moveable feast, Potluck

Picnic!

Our annual attempt to find partial true happiness by ingesting mass quantities of comestibles. This will be accompanied by social interchanges, jocularly, and someone being pushed (gently) into the pool. Hold the date: **April 17th 2:30 to 5**. Call Carolyn Frase with your contribution of a salad, or dessert, or entrée, or side dish. Ham, Rolls, plates & utensils, cold drinks (byob) will be supplied by the Society. Please reserve your place at the table by April 16th with Carolyn Frase. See directions on page 3. Big thanks to Steve Brown! Use email frasec@aol.com or phone 727-533-2279.

Laugh Lines

Levels of Alert

The English are feeling the pinch in relation to recent terrorist threats and have therefore raised their security level from "Miffed" to "Peeved."

Soon, though, security levels may be raised yet again to "Irritated" or even "A Bit Cross." The English have not been "A Bit Cross" since the blitz in 1940 when tea supplies nearly ran out. Terrorists have been re-categorized from "Tiresome" to "A Bloody Nuisance." The last time the British issued a "Bloody Nuisance" warning level was in 1588, when threatened by the Spanish Armada.

The Scots have raised their threat level from "Pissed Off" to "Let's get the Bastards." They don't have any other levels. This is the reason they have been used on the front line of the British army for the last 300 years.

The French government announced yesterday that it has raised its terror alert level from "Run" to "Hide." The only two higher levels in France are "Collaborate" and "Surrender." The rise was precipitated by a recent fire that destroyed France's white flag factory, effectively paralyzing the country's military capability.

Italy has increased the alert level from "Shout Loudly and Excitedly" to "Elaborate Military Posturing." Two more levels remain: "Ineffective Combat Operations" and "Change Sides."

The Germans have increased their alert state from "Disdainful Arrogance" to "Dress in Uniform and Sing Marching Songs." They also have two higher levels: "Invade a Neighbor" and "Lose."

Belgians, on the other hand, are all on holiday as usual; the only threat they are worried about is NATO pulling out of Brussels.

The Spanish are all excited to see their new submarines ready to deploy. These beautifully designed subs have glass bottoms so the new Spanish navy can get a really good look at the old Spanish navy.

Australia, meanwhile, has raised its security level from "No worries" to "She'll be alright, Mate." Three more escalation levels remain: "Crikey,!" "I think we'll need to cancel the barbie this weekend" and "The barbie is cancelled." So far no situation has ever warranted use of the final escalation level.

Thanks to **Connie Purdum**

HUMANIST SOCIETY OF THE SUNCOAST

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc.
the Association of Secular Humanist Societies

Board of Directors

Meets Sept., December, April

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Terry Eckstien, Jerry Moore,

~*~*~*~*~

Jim Butler Publisher.

Jim Peterson, Editor

Have an Idea, opinion or essay you want to share?

E-Mail us at:

jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Challenges in our future.

As a result of the recent November Elections, the Humanist community in Florida, and its many allies, face a situation of unprecedented deterioration in many aspects of everyday life. Education, environment, business regulation, finance, and politics are all in play in a great contest between the radical right and its reactionary agenda, and an enlightened vision of how the greatest good might be served in the interest of the greatest number within the context of a rapidly growing understanding of the limits of traditional methods of creating everything needed to satisfy the essentials of a good life.

The challenge for everyone is to our imagination, rationality, and the will to engage in public dialog to persuade our fellow citizens to explore new paths. It won't be easy, but it is necessary. **Jim Peterson**

WHERE YOU'RE GOING: About two miles north of downtown St. Petersburg on the east side of First St. N. between 49th and 51st Aves. N. to the Winston Park N.E. condominiums. We'll have exclusive use of a large clubhouse at the center of a park-like courtyard, with access shared with residents to its pool and covered outdoor patio. Enter off First St. onto the driveway either at 49th Ave. or a breath south of 51st. The driveways border the Winston Park "quadrant" you want (Buildings 700, 800 and 900). Drive to the end of the apartment-like buildings (you'll be able to see the clubhouse as you pass by a large open area to your left or right). Turn left at the stop sign if you enter from 49th, and right (no stop sign) entering from 51st. Every uncovered parking space you see (about 35) will be visitor parking. Park as close as you can to the grassy strip that divides the two main visitor parking strips. Opposite the center of the grassy strip you'll see a gate and walkway leading directly to the clubhouse. (There are also a few visitor (that is, uncovered) spaces in the immediate north-south driveway off First St. directly in front of side-by-side building entrances that converge on another gateway to the clubhouse. Many more visitor spaces are available in the other Winston Park quadrants to the south and east.) Anyone having problems finding the place or parking can call Steve Brown that day at 727-871-8413 (cell) or beforehand at 727-525-3487.

5090 Bay St. N.E. St. Petersburg Fl 33703

HOW TO GET THERE: From the north, I-275 or U.S. 19 to 62nd Ave. N., turn left to First St., turn right, entrances on left (either side of building immediately (across 51st Ave.) past the Shorecrest Prep School campus). From the south, I-275 (or any convenient north-south thoroughfare) to 38th Ave. N., east to First St., turn left, condo entrances on right. From the west, any east-west thoroughfare between 9th Ave. N. and 62nd Ave. N. to First St., turn left or right as appropriate, condo entrances on east side. From the Tampa area, off Gandy Bridge pass Derby Lane, turn left at 4th St. to 62nd Ave. N., turn left to 1st St., turn right to condo entrances on left; off Howard Frankland Bridge take 4th St. exit (left lanes) to 62d Ave N., turn left to First St., right to condo entrances on left -- alternatively (time travel is about the same) follow I-275 to 62d Ave. N., turn left to First St., turn right to condo entrances on left. NOTE: In St. Petersburg all "streets" run north and south, and all "avenues" run east and west. SB

Click [Here](#) to see a map.

Our Humanist Society is actively looking for interesting speakers with novel and well thought out ideas on just about any subject of interest to a general audience - even if not from a distinctly Humanist perspective.

Let me know if you would like to recommend a person, idea, or organization.

Call Jim at (813) 531-8138 or

E-mail me at:

jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Have an opinion, idea, or essay that needs to get vented? This newsletter is your space.

For editorial consideration for the next issue, contact Jim Peterson at:

jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Share your favorite restaurant.



Carolyn Frase

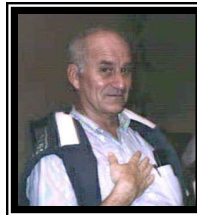
has graciously taken over as chair of the social committee. She welcomes your comments and suggestions for future venues for our s mid-month dinner.

Frasec@aol.com

Many thanks to

Glenn Paul

for all of his work.



Read Humanist Periodicals:

The Humanist, Free Inquiry, Free Mind, Humanist Perspectives, Skeptical Inquirer, Secular Humanist Bulletin, The Florida Humanist Journal, Skeptic, Essays in Humanism, and many others.

Humanist Quotes

Thinking must be one of the most difficult tasks known to man; look at the great efforts people will make to avoid it.



Frank Prahl

**Read
The insouciant, vexatious thoughts
of Steve Brown on [page 5](#)**



An Electronic News Update from The Humanists of Florida Association

SB 1854 challenges how biology and history are taught

HFA board member Bob Zannelli serves on the board of the Florida Citizens for Science, which HFA helped found when science standards were coming up for review in Florida. FCS was instrumental in inserting the word “evolution” into the state standards.

Bob alerts us to SB 1854: “The introduction of SB 1854 by Senator Wise is yet another attack on the teaching of the theory of evolution in Florida's public schools. The guise this legislation uses is to require that there be a critical analysis of the theory of evolution. This is Intelligent Design-speak for presenting the theory in a way that misrepresents its true status, which is that of a well-tested and well-supported theory, which is central to the science of biology. Intelligent Design is, of course, a stealth form of Creationism, dressed up to look like science in an effort to get it into school curricula.

“This bill also defines how American history is to be taught in the public schools. Here, ironically, the very idea of critical analysis seems to be strictly prohibited. Instead, American history is to be taught so as to extol the virtues of ‘free enterprise’ and ‘limited government,’ which are buzz words of a conservative ideology. This bill even modifies the words used in the Declaration of Independence, replacing ‘the pursuit of happiness’ with the word ‘property,’ which reveals the conservative ideology this bill requires to be taught as American History.

“In fairness, other parts of this bill are certainly not objectionable. For example, this bill requires teaching the role that slavery played in American history and requires that the contributions of African Americans be included in history curriculum. Also required is the teaching of the history of the Holocaust that is correctly related to prejudice, racism and stereotyping. This bill also requires that the importance of ‘tolerances of diversity in a Democracy’ be included as part of the curriculum. These sections of the bill are to be applauded.

“Hopefully, wiser heads will prevail, and this bill will not be signed into law in its present form. A better bill would require as a core requirement of the educational process the teaching of critical thinking and skepticism – especially with regard to any established political orthodoxy. In addition, this bill should require that all scientific theories be taught in the context of their current status in the science community, and that science curriculum should – first and foremost – teach the methods of science with an emphasis on its self-correcting nature.”

Please visit
www.FloridaHumanist.org
to support HFA with your
membership & donations



**Humanists of Florida
Association**
Reason and Compassion in Action

First Annual International Freethought Film Festival May 13 – 15, 2011

The Freethought Film Festival Foundation, is hosting the First Annual International Freethought Film Festival at the historic Tampa Theatre located at 711 Franklin Street in downtown Tampa. The program will consist of independent films selected from film submissions that have been entered for consideration. Ten different screenings of films, which best reflect the mission of promoting reason, critical thinking, and freedom of inquiry, will be scheduled. The film selections are to be announced after the final judging in January, 2011.

Read more at http://www.freethoughtfilmfest.org/web_documents/iffeventannouncementpress.pdf

International Freethought Film Festival

When: May 13th -15th, 2011

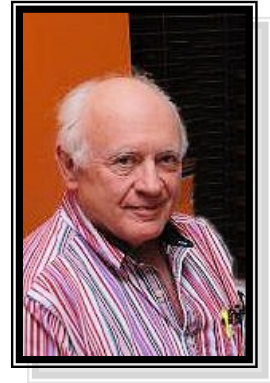
Where: Tampa Theatre, 711 N. Franklin St.

Tampa, FL 33602

ON THE WAY TO GRAMMAR'S HOUSE

Steve Brown

– My Latest Bill of Writes



[Take that, media...Here's a hodge-podge of my recent screeds (and one stolen from another commenter) aimed at online newspaper and magazine articles or their commenters.]

1. Public radio and television need MORE public funding not defunding.

Airwaves are used free of charge by commercial broadcasters. The cable industry has VOLUNTARILY funded the three C-Span channels. Over-the-air broadcasters should be REQUIRED to pay taxes or royalties dedicated to funding an expansion of public over-the-air media.

Additional mechanisms could be found to compensate should the fortunes of the over-the-air television industry continue to decline, and their taxes or royalties fail to sustain public television to the extent desired. (To NY Times 3-9-11 on resignation of NPR CEO)

2. The following is a comment by another (calling himself “?Drtmuir”) on a Washington Post column by Richard Cohen, who may be the least pestilential of the Post's subset of pestilential columnists.

"Sick of high paid teachers? Teachers' salaries are driving up taxes, and they only work 9 or 10 months a year! It's time we put things in perspective and pay them for what they do - baby sit! We can get that for less than minimum wage. That's right. Let's give them \$3.00 an hour and only the hours they worked; not any of that silly planning time, or any time they spend before or after school. That would be \$19.50 a day (7:45 to 3:00 PM with 45 min. Off for lunch and planning that equals 6 1/2 hours).

So each parent should pay \$19.50 a day for these teachers to baby-sit their children.

Now how many do they teach in a day? Maybe 30? So that's $\$19.50 \times 30 = \585.00 a day. However, remember they only work 180 days a year!!! I am not going to pay them for any vacations.

LETS SEE?. That's $\$585 \times 180 = \$105,300$ per year.

And what about those special education teachers, and the ones with Master's degrees? Well, we could pay them minimum wage (\$7.75), and just to be fair, round it off to \$8.00 an hour. That would be $\$8 \times 6 \frac{1}{2} \text{ hours} \times 30 \text{ children} \times 180 \text{ days} = \$280,800$ per year.

Wait a minute! There's something wrong here! There sure is!

The average teacher's salary (nationwide) is **\$50,000**. $\$50,000/180 \text{ days} = \$277.77/\text{per day}/30 \text{ students} = \$9.25/6.5 \text{ hours} = \$1.42 \text{ per hour per student} - \text{a very inexpensive baby-sitter.}$

3. ALLAH, ALLAH, ALLAH In Free

I've read Carroll's "House of War" and, atheist that I am, appreciate him as a "good" Catholic in the tradition of the Catholic Workers, the Berrigans and Latin American" liberationists."

However, he remains somewhat soft-headed (I wish I could think of a more respectful way to express this, but -- alas -- religionists' childhood imprints/orientations can be hard to overcome). Carroll denies that Islam was advanced "by the sword. It seems to me there were a lot of forced or military-encouraged conversions to Islam in North Africa, the Levant, greater Arabia and Persia (I'm shakier on India, Malaysia and Indonesia), and an occupation of Iberia, so "the sword" had something to do with the spread of Islam, as it had to do with Christianity.

Of the three tribes of Abraham only the Jews are jacob-come-latelies to the use of the sword.

There's just something about a Big Daddy in the Sky that says, "Bring it on."

But more to the point, Carroll's pointing to mosques -- and worship -- as (suddenly!) Sources of rebellion ignores the fact that most or all other civil institutions that could have served that function in the recently conflicted countries, particularly Egypt, had been suppressed. Where else are rebels (or terrorists for that matter) to be informed, inspired and initially recruited to action? *(See page 6)*

Steve Brown's Column...(continued from page 5)

As to Carroll's claim that "the call to prayer is a five-times-daily reminder of that infinite individual dignity" ("dignity," according to Carroll, is the "sense of self-worth that, for believers, comes to a felt closeness to God"), I offer that it is "a five-times-daily reminder of that infinite individual SUBMISSION" to "God"("submission" is the literal English meaning of "Islam).

The call to prayer is a beautiful song. But I'll take my "dignity" as earned by my own character and my own actions, not as a gift from outside. (To Salon.com 3-8-11)

4. THEORY OR PRACTICE/FICTION OR FACT

You say "Absent explicit shareholder actions to the contrary, corporations exist to reward the shareholders, just as democratic governments exist to benefit the voters."

That's the theory. Interested in the practice?

For all practical purposes, managerial capitalism, rather than ownership capitalism, is dominant today. Consequently it would be more accurate to say "corporations exist to benefit their managers and bettors (that is, short-term speculators who are only nominally "shareholders").

This happens because of interlocking facts: (1) concentration of ownership in large fiduciary and speculator/investor institutions such as pension, mutual and exchange-traded funds, hedge funds and other private investment pools, (2) transient volatility of invested capital (that is, some of these "owners" move in and out of their "investments" in months, weeks, days or less, (3) directors owing management for their nominations to the board, (4) in turn the directors reward management through their compensation committees that set management remuneration, (5) emphasis on managerial (and director) compensation by stock option or other forms of year-by-year performance based compensation which leads to short-term earnings focus for their benefit and that of short-term traders rather than of true long-term owners (insofar as they still exist).

Take note that, for years now, in published earnings reports the emphasis is in how the reported numbers exceed or fall short of the "expected" or "estimated" numbers, not the relationship to longer-term trends or even a last-year real comparison.

And as to the second part of your statement that I quoted above, there are the occasional votes we individuals stuff into ballot boxes, pull levers for, punch into mechanical/electronic/optical devices or mail, and the perpetual flow of "votes" which corporations, wealthy individuals and organizations cast "offsite" and continuously.

There is theory and there is practice. (To Salon.com 3-8-11)

Steve Brown

OUR BEST LETTERS

They've got theirs

While Gov. Rick Scott and his merry band of swashbucklers (a.k.a. the Legislature) revel in the cuts they're dictating to the unemployment compensation system and to teachers, public employees and other middle- and working-class Floridians, we hear not one peep about what sacrifice well-to-do Floridians can make to help through this fiscal crisis.

We need to bring back the intangible tax on large stock portfolios and impose a tangible tax on luxury goods like boats, RVs and expensive cars. We need to have an estate tax so that those who have benefited the most from our economic system are required to leave something to the state.

The arguments against imposing some higher taxes on the well-to-do are red herrings. All middle-class and working Floridians, including those unemployed who want to work, should be livid about the fact that the Republicans have an undeclared economic war going on against the middle and poorer classes. The governor seems to be telling all of us, "Hey, I've got mine. The rest of you are on your own."

Mark W. Brandt, Dunedin



March 24, 2011

The Humanist Hour Podcast # 60: *Shining the Light of Reason*



In this month's [audio podcast](#), Jes Constantine and Todd Stiefel interview Fred Edwords of United Coalition of Reason, debate the concept that vegan priorities are humanist priorities with surprise special guest, Jason Torpy, and highlight the AHA 70th Annual Conference with AHA staffer, Maggie Ardiente. Download this regular podcast at the AHA website above.

Segment 1: Surprise Drop-In by Special Guest, Jason Torpy

Jason Torpy is president of the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers and serves on the Board of Directors of the American Humanist Association. Jason recently wrote [an article](#) for the Humanist Network News, AHA's weekly e-zine, called "[Why Vegan Priorities are Humanist Priorities](#)." In his short article, Jason claims that you—the enlightened and rational humanist—will suddenly realize the error of your carnivorous ways. You carnivores, or “carnies,” are torturing animals for fun. Harsh? True? Both yes.

Let us know what you think! Call our Listener Comment Line: (202) 618-1371

Segment 2: Update on the [AHA's 70th Annual Conference](#)



Don't miss one of the largest gatherings of humanists, atheists and freethinkers from across the country! This exciting four-day event, hosted by the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard University and held jointly with the Secular Student Alliance, will feature informative breakout sessions, activist training for humanist leaders, banquets honoring distinguished awardees, book signings by celebrity authors, and more! [Maggie Ardiente](#) is the director of development at the American Humanist Association, where she coordinates the AHA's fundraising programs.

Learn more and register at: AmericanHumanist.org/Conference

Segment 3: Shining the Light of Reason with Fred Edwords, National Director of the [United Coalition of Reason](#)



Fred Edwords has a long history in organized humanism. For 15 years he was executive director of the American Humanist Association and for 12 years editor of the Humanist magazine. Today he serves as national director of the United Coalition of Reason, a national organization that works to raise the visibility of local nontheistic groups all over America. United CoR does this nationally, by conducting campaigns which highlight the fact that nontheists live in every community across America. Locally, we do this by promoting informal cooperation among local groups, hosting local coalition websites, training group

leaders, and funding publicity campaigns. [Listen to the Humanist Hour Podcast #60 here.](#)



Be a more active Humanist!

Being an active agent of social change in many ways defines the practical meaning of Humanism. Despite the vast numbers of us on this planet, all too few actually are involved in making life better for all of us. Especially if you are retired, or have leisure, you should consider expanding the range of your positive involvement in the lives of others.

At the most recent Board meeting, the directors present announced several initiatives to enable members to play more significant roles in the life of our community.

Mark Winterbottom is leading a section that will enable Humanists to be more of a presence in the science program at the St Petersburg Aquarium.

The board also decided to make the [Tampabay Post Carbon Council](#) an adjunct to the Society.

As always, we will continue to participate in social service programs. Be sure to contribute! -- - *Jim P.*



Atheists. Agnostics. Humanists.
Americans.

ACTI★N ALERT

The U.S. House of Representatives is set to vote on H.R. 471, the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act. This legislation would reauthorize and expand the Washington, D.C. federal private school voucher pilot program, under which millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars are funneled toward private religious schools that preach religious dogma and can discriminate against staff and students.

The Secular Coalition for America objects to voucher programs that use federal taxpayer dollars for private religious schools that proselytize to students and are exempted from federal civil rights laws, allowing them to discriminate in enrollment and hiring on the basis of faith.

More than 80 percent of students receiving federal vouchers through the D.C. program attend private religious schools with such civil rights exemptions but no opt-out option for religious instruction.

Currently, this is the only federal voucher program subsidized with your tax dollars. However, new legislation has been introduced to create a federal voucher program nationwide. The Secular Coalition for America takes no position on the use of vouchers for secular private education, but SCA opposes the re-authorization of the D.C. voucher program because it has resulted in the federally funded religious training of thousands of D.C. children.

Help SCA protest this blatant violation of the separation of church and state. [Write to your representative in the U.S. House right now.](#) Tell your representative to vote against programs that send your tax dollars to private religious schools.

[You can read the entire text of the resolution here](#), and use [the form at this link](#) to contact your representative in the House.

Sean Faircloth

Executive Director Secular Coalition for America



Statement from Howard Simon, Executive Director, ACLU of Florida:

"I'm not sure why Governor Scott does not know that the policy he recreated by Executive Order today has already been declared unconstitutional.

"The state of Florida cannot force people to surrender their constitutional rights in order to work for the state. Absent any evidence of illegal drug use, or assigned a safety-sensitive job, people have a right to be left alone.

"Coming from a Governor who promised to protect our freedoms by limiting the intrusive reach of government into our personal lives, this massive expansion of government power at the expense of basic rights is stunning and exposes the state to serious future legal liability.

"Since we have already succeeded once in overturning this unconstitutional expansion of government power, the ACLU of Florida is willing to represent any state employee or association of state employees who will have their rights infringed upon if the announced policy takes effect."

For more information on Civil liberty in Florida, see: <http://www.aclufl.org>