

Bill No. SB 1358

Amendment No. 1

	<u>Senate</u>	CHAMBER ACTION	<u>House</u>
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The Committee on Children and Families recommended the following amendment:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause

and insert:

Section 1. (1) For purposes of this act, "program" means:

(a) Any state program funded under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, as amended by section 103(a) of Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193.

(b) Any other program established or modified under Title I or Title II of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 that permits contracts with organizations or permits certificates, vouchers, or other forms of disbursement to be provided to beneficiaries as a means of providing assistance.

(c) Any other state program or policy initiative that provides direct assistance to individuals or families.

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1 (2) Any agency of this state or political subdivision
 2 of this state may contract with religious organizations or
 3 allow religious organizations to accept certificates,
 4 vouchers, or other forms of disbursement under any program, on
 5 the same basis as any other nongovernmental provider without
 6 impairing the religious character of such organizations.

7 (3) Any religious organization is eligible as a
 8 contractor, on the same basis as any other nongovernmental
 9 organization, to provide assistance or to accept certificates,
 10 vouchers, or other forms of disbursement under any program.
 11 Any agency of this state or any political subdivision of this
 12 state receiving funds under any program may not discriminate
 13 against any organization that is or applies to be a contractor
 14 to provide assistance, or which accepts certificates,
 15 vouchers, or other forms of disbursement, on the basis that
 16 the organization has a religious character.

17 (4)(a) A religious organization that has contracted
 18 with any agency of this state or any political subdivision of
 19 this state under a program, or which accepts certificates,
 20 vouchers, or other forms of disbursement described in
 21 subsection (1), shall retain its independence from state and
 22 local governments, including such organization's control over
 23 the definition, development, practice, and expression of its
 24 religious beliefs.

25 (b) An agency of this state or any political
 26 subdivision of this state may not require a religious
 27 organization to alter its form of internal governance or
 28 remove religious art, icons, scripture, or other symbols to be
 29 eligible to contract to provide assistance, or to accept
 30 certificates, vouchers, or other forms of disbursement, funded
 31 under a program.

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1 (5) Each agency which administers any program
 2 described in this section shall prepare a plan to implement
 3 this section and, no later than September 1, 1999, and shall
 4 submit a copy of the plan to the Governor, the President of
 5 the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

6 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
 7 law.

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 9
 10 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

11 And the title is amended as follows:

12 Delete everything before the enacting clause

13
 14 and insert:

15 A bill to be entitled
 16 An act relating to state contracts with
 17 religious organizations; providing a
 18 definition; authorizing certain agencies to
 19 contract with religious organizations under
 20 certain programs or allow religious
 21 organizations to accept certificates, vouchers,
 22 or other forms of disbursement under certain
 23 programs; specifying eligibility of religious
 24 organizations; providing certain protections
 25 for religious organizations; requiring certain
 26 agencies to prepare implementation plans and
 27 submit the plans to the Governor and the
 28 Legislature; providing an effective date.

29
 30 WHEREAS, state government should engage Florida's
 31 religious organizations to enhance care for the needy and fill

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1 hollow hearts, and

2 WHEREAS, government must have qualities of the spirit,
3 and

4 WHEREAS, the federal Personal Responsibility and Work
5 Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 specifically authorized
6 states to administer and provide services under specific
7 programs through contracts with charitable, religious, or
8 private organizations, and

9 WHEREAS, health care facilities operated by or
10 affiliated with religious organizations have been effective
11 partners in the provision of public health services for many
12 years without interfering with the religious liberties of
13 Floridians, and

14 WHEREAS, the Legislature intends to engage Florida's
15 churches, synagogues, other religious congregations, and
16 spiritual entrepreneurs to enhance care for the needy, NOW,
17 THEREFORE,

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