

JULY 19, 2001

**SCHAKOWSKY OPPOSES CHARITABLE CHOICE LEGISLATION  
"BILL SANCTIONS GOVERNMENT FUNDED DISCRIMINATION"**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today issued the following statement after the House approved H.R. 7, legislation to provide federal funds to religious institutions to carry out social programs.

**"No one denies the value and good work of faith based organizations in the field of social services. Faith based organizations already play an important and vital role in providing needed social welfare programs. And we as a government already support this work. For example, in FY 2000, faith based organizations administered an estimated \$1 billion in HUD assistance. Catholic Charities receives approximately 60% of its funding from government sources and Lutheran Services in America receives approximately 40% from government sources."**

**"However, in order to receive federal money, religious organizations must agree not to discriminate. This structure was established to comply with two of our nation's most fundamental principles, equal protection under the law and the separation of church and state.**

**"This bill undermines these principles by sanctioning government-funded discrimination and breaks down the historic separation of church and state. If this bill becomes the law of the land, Alicia Pedreira, a therapist for the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, and whose case was reported in April in the New York Times, will become acceptable and legal. The New York Times reported, "Pedreira liked her job, and she had a sterling reputation among her peers. But she wasn't the chattiest person in the office. On the advice of the man who hired her, she generally kept her personal life to herself-until, her photograph unexpectedly popped up at the Kentucky State Fair. Taken by an amateur photographer during a 1997 AIDS walk and entered without her knowledge, in the state-fair art competition, the image depicts Pedreira, in the company of a woman with short-cropped brown hair whose arms dangle suggestively around Pedreira's waist. The two women look distinctively like a couple. A few weeks after word of the photograph circulated through the office, Pedreira was fired."**

**"Under this bill, an organization could use federal dollars to discriminate against gays and lesbians or against someone involved in an interracial relationship or second marriage, if that status violates the doctrine of the religion providing the service. This bill would override state and local civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and would give organizations like the Salvation Army, everything it hoped for and more. It will also create legal support for discriminatory practices towards unwed mothers from a religious organization that does not believe in premarital sex. These are only a few of the scenarios of discrimination our taxpayers will fund."**

**"The language in this bill severely limits the government's ability to protect the constitutional rights of both employees and beneficiaries. HR 7 amounts to State-sanctioned discrimination and we must defeat this bill. Why are we moving our nation backwards? Creating a breeding ground for discrimination and inequality to foster and grow? This legislation strips individuals of their civil liberties and endangers the principles that constitute the very fabric of our nation."**