

FRIDAY BRIEF

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Clarification Sought on Ashcroft Comments

An article recently published on a religious website by syndicated columnist Cal Thomas has attributed disturbing comments to Attorney General John Ashcroft. In the article, titled "Men of Faith in Washington, DC, Need Our Prayers," Cal Thomas praises Ashcroft for the following statement reportedly made in a private interview:

"Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you."

Several Muslim American groups are seeking clarification from the office of the Attorney General regarding the article and quote. Several officials in the Community Relations Service at the Department of Justice were contacted seeking an explanation for the comments. A response from the Attorney General has not yet been communicated.

We encourage the members of the Muslim American community to also seek clarification from the Department of Justice for the comment attributed to the Attorney General by Cal Thomas. Politely explain that the statement is inaccurate and offensive, and that it is not in touch with the tone of inclusion and understanding that has been advocated by the President and other national leaders.

Contact information for the Attorney General follows:

United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

E-Mail: AskDOJ@usdoj.gov

Phone: (202) 353-1555 (Public Comment Line)
(202) 307-6777 (Attorney General Ashcroft's Office)

Deal Reached on Charitable Giving, Faith Based Legislation

President Bush unveiled on Thursday compromise legislation to help faith based charities and spur more charitable giving among Americans. The new legislation was announced at the White House with two key backers, Senators Rick Santorum (R-PA) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT).

Titled the Charity Aid, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act of 2002, the revised legislation will seek to provide several avenues of help to charitable organizations: tax incentives to spur private giving; programs to promote savings and economic self-sufficiency for low income families; technical assistance to help smaller social service providers do more work; narrowly-targeted efforts to remove unfair barriers facing faith-based groups in competing for federal aid; and, additional federal funding for essential social service programs.