

August 18, 2008

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 1322 (Lowenthal) – SUPPORT

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCL) requests your approval of SB 1322, which creates a religious exemption to the loyalty oath requirement for public employees.

Obviously, the loyalty oath requirement will not deter those who would engage in terrorism or other violent activities to overthrow the government. To the contrary, those who are impacted are people whose religious convictions are in conflict with the loyalty oath requirements. Recently two university instructors, Marianne Kearney-Brown and Wendy Gonaver, both members of the Religious Society of Friends, were terminated by the California State University (CSU) because they could not in good conscience adhere to their oath without clarifying that they could only defend the Constitution nonviolently.

These are people who uphold the laws of the land and pose no threat to society. The choices they face are to set aside their religious convictions and sign the oath—which trivializes both—or they may refuse to sign the oath and be denied employment. Though Kearney-Brown and Gonaver were eventually reinstated, it was only after considerable negative publicity for the CSU and considerable legal wrangling in deference to an outdated and ineffective legal remnant of the McCarthy era.

People of faith make outstanding contributions to public service. They should not be denied public employment on account of their religious convictions.

For these reasons, FCL urges you to sign SB 1322.

Sincerely yours,

JIM LINDBURG  
Legislative Director

Cc: Senator Alan Lowenthal