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A Group is Questioning the Center for Arizona Policy Tax Exempt Status

An Arizona atheist organization wants the IRS to investigate the tax exempt status of the Center for Arizona Policy.

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Secular Coalition for Arizona has filed a complaint with the Internal Revenue Service this week asking for an investigation into Center for Arizona Policy's 501(c)3 public charity tax-exempt statuses. The organization has been looking into Center for Arizona Policy's tax status to ensure that religious organizations do not receive special privilege under the law, including tax law.

The Secular Coalition for Arizona believes the Center for Arizona Policy is a religious lobby organization that seeks to develop and influence public policy and inject fundamentalist, evangelical Christian values into legislation in the state of Arizona.

Executive Director Serah Blain said an organization which intends to spend a substantial portion of its resources on a public policy agenda is not eligible to be designated as a 501(c)3 and should instead register as a 501(c)4 organization, which can engage in unlimited lobbying. In contrast to a 501(c)3, donations to a 501(c)4 organization are not tax-exempt.

"It seems that the Center for Arizona Policy primary activities is lobbying, if that is the case they would be in violation of their 501(c)3," said Blain.

Others have also questioned and filed complaints about Center for Arizona Policy's operations as a lobby organization despite its charity status.

The Center for Arizona Policy released this statement:

"Every year, independent auditors examine our books at Center for Arizona Policy, Inc. (CAP), and every year these independent auditors have given us their highest rating – a clean auditor's report.

Indeed, CAP goes even further to assure our supporters and all Arizonans of our integrity by voluntarily meeting the high standards of the Evangelical Council on Financial Accountability (ECFA). Our IRS Form 990 is not only supplied to the IRS, but also to ECFA as further assurance that CAP operates with utmost integrity. Additionally, CAP fully complies with ECFA's rigorous Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship™ that focus on board governance, financial transparency, integrity in fundraising, and proper use of charity resources.

The accusations against CAP are without legal merit orfactual basis. This is a public relations stunt by those desiring to silence our representation of the foundational principles of good public policy: a high regard for human life, marriage and family, and religious liberty."

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