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What Is Freethought Arizona?

Freethought Arizona is a blog for freethinkers in general and Arizona atheists, agnostics, skeptics, and secular humanists in particular. Here in Tucson, we have several active organizations supporting the freethought community. They include: Tucson Atheists, Skeptics of Tucson, and the Freethought Arizona meeting organization. The Freethought Arizona web site is www.freethoughtaz.org

In Phoenix, there are chapters of such national organizations as Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), the American Humanist Association, and Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU). Many freethinkers belong to more than one of these groups. Each organization occupies an important niche in support of nonbelievers and their philosophical, social, and political concerns. You can learn more about them and when they meet by going to their various websites.

FFRF and AU are the most politically active. They aggressively challenge in court government violations of the Constitutional Principle of Separation of Church & State. Freethought Arizona is more

Let's take away CAP's Tax Exempt Status!

by Don Lacey on Jun. 02, 2012, under [Abortion](#), [Arizona Families](#), [Atheism](#), [AZ Politics](#), [Biblical Inerrancy](#), [Christian Self-Righteous Arrogance](#), [Christianity](#), [Critical Thinking](#), [Education](#), [Environment](#), [Ethics](#), [Faith](#), [Fundamentalism](#), [Gay Marriage](#), [God & Bible](#), [Government](#), [History](#), [Islam](#), [Reason](#), [Religion](#), [Responsible Government](#), [Science](#), [Separation of Church & State](#)

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Editor's note: Before I get into Jim Wilson's opinion on CAP (Center for Arizona Policy), I'd like to report the Secular Coalition for Arizona's position on the controversy.

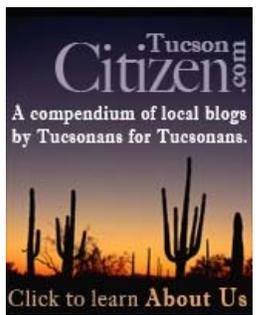
The Secular Coalition for Arizona was formed to give a voice to the non-theists in Arizona and to help insure that the laws that affect ALL Arizona citizens are based on reason and science and not sectarian religious beliefs. We recognize that the Center for Arizona Policy as an evangelical Christian organization that appears to operate extensive lobbying activities beyond that allowed for organizations with a 501(c)3 designation (www.stopcap.org). The Secular Coalition for Arizona operates under 501(c)4 rules in order to legally conduct unlimited lobbying. Unlike a 501(c)3, contributions to a 501(c)4 are not tax deductible; this ensures that taxpayers are not subsidizing political lobbying. It appears to us that lobbying is a substantial part of the CAP's operation. We would simply like to know if Center for Arizona Policy's activities are legal for a 501(c)3. We are concerned that Center for Arizona Policy's taxpayer-subsidized lobbying is an example of religious privilege in that secular organizations of a similar nature, including SC for Arizona, must operate under 501(c)4 rules. You can find out more about the Secular Coalition for Arizona at its website: <http://www.secularaz.org/>.

From Jim Wilson:

Let's stop the Center for Arizona Policy and their theocratic politics along with their complete control of the Republican Party in this state. They have recently sent out a victory email boasting of their influence in passing huge numbers of anti-choice bill and openly theocratic bills. Though they have the benefits of 501(C)3 non profit, they flagrantly violate the restrictions imposed on such groups. These include engaging in excessive political activity including lobbying promoting political candidates, writing, and lobbying for legislation. Even if I agreed with this organizations openly anti-secular pro-theocracy mission, I still would recognize that it is unfair for them to engage in this type of deliberate tax fraud while a group like our own Freethought Arizona strictly abides by these restrictions.

Check out the complaint to the IRS promoted by this site: <http://www.stopcap.org/index.html> and join the complaint here: <http://www.stopcap.org/joincomplaint.html>.

Though it was a previously covered on this blog here is a reminder of some of the legislation that CAP pushed this Legislative session: (**editor's note:** this is just a small sample. For more, check out CAP's own website: <http://www.azpolicy.org/current-bill-status>).

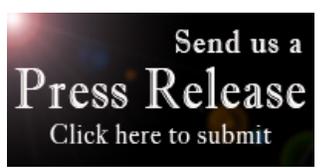


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academically oriented and offers monthly programs and smaller discussion groups often focused on aspects of science, religion, skepticism and/or humanism. Tucson Atheists and Skeptics of Tucson engage in thought-provoking discussions, but are more social.

Many of these organizations are partners in the Secular Coalition for Arizona (SCA), a political organization whose primary goal is to keep religion out of government. For this reason, Secular Coalition for Arizona often finds itself in opposition to the policies advocated by the Center for Arizona Policy (CAP).

Generally, we freethinkers don't care what others believe about the supernatural. We think of all religions as silly, often dangerous, superstitions. Individual religious beliefs are none of our business, until believers make it our business by trying to force their religious worldview and primitive morality on the rest of us through law and public policy. Then we care a lot. Thus, we have a natural antipathy toward the fundamentalist-dominated Arizona legislature and Governor Brewer.

Freethought has a long and illustrious history. Freethinkers are "free" because we are not locked in ideology, doctrine, or dogma. Freethinkers make lousy followers because we dare to question authority, tradition, revelation, and dogma. Instead, we believe that opinions, and especially laws and public policies, should be based on science, empirical evidence, verifiable experiences, independent historical accounts, and sound logic.

SB1365 (Signed into law on May 12) permits medical professionals including doctors and pharmacist to discriminate and refuse service to anyone who disagrees with their religious views including homosexuals or people simply trying to buy contraceptives. State licensed professionals should not be discriminating or denying services especially for religious reasons nor should the state be in the practice promoting this type of discrimination. There is also SB1359 (Signed on April 17th) which essentially legalizes medical fraud allowing doctors to withhold information about potential birth defects and prenatal problems from pregnant mothers misleading them to believe everything is ok when it is not.

HB2800 (Signed May 4th) bars people on public assistance for health care being reimbursed for services provided by Planned Parenthood or any other Clinic that provides abortion. There is already a law prohibiting state money being used to fund abortion so this bill simply makes life more difficult for people on public assistance. HB2563 (Signed April 12th) allows schools to teach from the Christian bible while forbidding the use of other religious text. This sort of favoritism is a flat out violation of the separation of church and state and unconstitutional.

There is also the infamous HB2036 (Signed April 12th) the anti-abortion bill that is based on the fallacious notion that a fetus feels pain after 20 weeks so therefore abortions should be banned after this point. This is false as the neural networks simply have not developed that far.

There is no legitimate scientific information that supports the statement that a fetus feels pain and The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists states that "no legitimate scientific information that supports the statement that a fetus feels pain." It also requires a 24 hour wait for abortions. This I never understood I would think pro-life types would prefer an abortion take place as early in the pregnancy as possible. The bill also mandates ultra-sounds and takes away the decision making power away from the woman and puts it in the hands of government.

It is no secret that CAP plays a big role in Arizona Politics. Moderate Republicans running for state congress are guaranteed to see well funded CAP supported challengers and it has also been revealed that at least some support for CAP comes from ALEC the corporatist group that explicitly pushes to pass laws that benefit big business over the rest of the population. CAP represents everything that is interventionist and wrong with the Christian right and it is time to end their ill-gotten tax-free ride!

This entry was posted on Saturday, June 2nd, 2012 at 5:00 am and is filed under [Abortion](#), [Arizona Families](#), [Atheism](#), [AZ Politics](#), [Biblical Inerrancy](#), [Christian Self-Righteous Arrogance](#), [Christianity](#), [Critical Thinking](#), [Education](#), [Environment](#), [Ethics](#), [Faith](#), [Fundamentalism](#), [Gay Marriage](#), [God & Bible](#), [Government](#), [History](#), [Islam](#), [Reason](#), [Religion](#), [Responsible Government](#), [Science](#), [Separation of Church & State](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.



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Deedsnotcreeds

I hope I'll see more names of FreeThinkers, along with mine, on the "Stop Cap" petition. I also have many questions about the validity of some of the activities of churches when it comes to abiding by the rules and regs of a 501(c)(3).

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Jim Wilson

I agree, and I touched on that on my piece on mega-churches. I suspect, that at some point, I will write an entire piece on revoking the tax-exempt status of churches.

2 days ago in reply to Deedsnotcreeds 1 Like Like Reply



RicardoSmall

Just signed Stop Cap and shared the column on Facebook. Free Thought Arizona is great!

1 day ago 2 Likes Like Reply



Jim Wilson

Thanks!!!

1 day ago in reply to RicardoSmall 1 Like Like Reply



James Smith, Retired Bum in Brazil

The anti-deluvian politics is why I am happy not to live in Arizona any more. Twenty-five years of enduring Joe Arpaio-type attitudes toward the COnstitution and equal rights for all was enough.

I appreciated the efforts being made, but Arizona has nothing going for it except climate.

1 day ago 1 Like Like Reply

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Secularist awaits frank discussion of faith-based ideas in public square »

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