

To the Editor:

With all the ruckus about community organizing in Oklahoma City it is time to tell the Catholic people that they have been contributing to progressive political activities for years through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development [CCHD]. In 2007 the CCHD collected \$12,227,540.00 from American Catholic parishes. \$9,474,785.00 was granted in that year primarily to community organizing activities. In November of 2008 the CCHD finally stopped their grants to ACORN but continues to support the IAF. Bishop Baker of Birmingham, Alabama refused to collect for the CCHD in 2008 and instead made it a campaign for the churches in Latin America. Other bishops have also refused to collect for CCHD.

CCHD has been awarding grants of \$35,000.00 per year to Possibilities, Inc. in Oklahoma City, whose mission is "to strengthen the ability of people to work together for community change." They have done some good work and are supported by a number of large local corporations and well known philanthropists. However, Possibilities, Inc. has no more to do with the Catholic Church than the Red Cross. The CCHD explicitly does not fund Catholic institutions and apostolates that work for the poor.

An additional \$35,000.00 grantee for 2009 in Oklahoma City is Oklahoma Sponsoring Committee, Inc. [OSC]. This interfaith community organizing group has received its non-profit status through affiliating with Communities Foundation of Oklahoma, Inc., which has an endowed fund called the Women's Foundation of Oklahoma. The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma awards grants to Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma. Birthchoice recently asked the Communities Foundation of Oklahoma about grant funding but was turned down because "they didn't meet the criteria"; now, we know why. As Richard John Neuhaus wrote, "you cannot fund only one half of an activist's time when he is not working to maintain abortion on demand."

As OSC continues to financially support and be directed by IAF community organizing it is time for our second collection in late November to be taken up for a charitable cause that is Catholic, not political. We should opt out of the CCHD and support other needed causes identified by our bishop.

Tom Morris,

St. John the Baptist Parish