

The Rev. Dr. Gwynne M. Guibord,
Chair
Ecumenical Officer, Episcopal Diocese
of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
Ms. Sumeet Kaur-Bal,
Vice Chair-at-large
Entertainment Weekly, New York, NY
Mr. Marvin Chiles,
Vice Chair-at-large
The Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma
City, Oklahoma City, OK
Rabbi Jack Moline,
Vice Chair-at-large
Agudas Achim Congregation of
Northern Virginia, Alexandria, VA
Mr. Alexander Forger, *Secretary*
Oak Springs Farms, LLC, New York, NY
Rabbi David Gelfand, *Treasurer*
The Jewish Center of the Hamptons,
East Hampton, NY
Imam W. Mahdi Bray
Muslim American Society Freedom
Foundation, Washington, DC
The Rev. Dr. Amos C. Brown
Third Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA
Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell
Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY
Ms. Norma Curtis Cohen
The Interfaith Alliance of Nassau
County, Manhasset, NY
The Rev. Dr. David Currie
Texas Baptists Committed, San Angelo, TX
Ms. Denise Davidoff
Former Moderator, Unitarian
Universalist Association, Norwalk, CT
The Rt. Rev. Jane Holmes Dixon,
Immediate Past President
Retired Suffragan Bishop, Episcopal
Diocese of Washington, Washington, DC
Mr. Arun Gandhi
Co-founder, MK Gandhi Institute for
Nonviolence, Memphis, TN
Dr. Maher H. Hathout
Spokesperson, Muslim Public Affairs
Council, Los Angeles, CA
The Rev. Leonard B. Jackson
Director Emeritus
First African Methodist Episcopal
Church, Los Angeles, CA
Bishop Frederick C. James
Director Emeritus
The African Methodist Episcopal Church,
Columbia, SC
The Rev. T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki
New York Buddhist Church, New York, NY
The Rev. Dr. Albert M.
Pennybacker, *Past President*
Consultant, Religious Relationships &
Public Policy, Lexington, KY
The Rev. Dr. Staccato Powell
Quest, West Chester, PA
The Rev. Gardner Taylor,
Director Emeritus, Brooklyn, NY
Mr. William P. Thompson,
Director Emeritus, LaGrange, IL
The Rev. Dr. Herbert Valentine,
Founding Chair, Philadelphia, PA
Mr. Foy Valentine,
Director Emeritus, Dallas, TX
The Rev. Dr. J. Philip Wogaman,
Past Chair, Washington, DC



April 7, 2005

Dear Senator:

I write to you today as the president of The Interfaith Alliance, a nonpartisan, national grassroots organization with over 150,000 members drawn from over 75 faith traditions dedicated to promoting the positive and healing role of religion in public life. We urge you to **oppose all efforts to eliminate the over 200-year-old filibuster in the United States Senate.**

As people of faith and good will dedicated to defending religious liberty and promoting healthy democracy, we believe that the religious values of fairness, integrity and mutual respect for differing viewpoints must be a part of the legislative process. From across the spectrum of faith traditions, we share the conviction that minority voices must be respected as well as heard.

As you know, one source of the Senate's great power is the guarantee that every Senator has the right to filibuster a piece of legislation or even a particular judicial nominee. **Our entire system of checks and balances depends on a full debate in the Senate.** In the confirmation process, the filibuster was meant to be used sparingly to promote accountability and compromise. Throughout our history, both political parties have benefited from the opportunity to utilize the filibuster. **The "nuclear option" of eliminating the filibuster would destabilize our system of checks and balances and set a dangerous precedent that threatens other important issues.** This would leave the majority with the power to reign with absolute tyranny over everyone in both the minority and dissenting majority. Recognizing that power in both houses of Congress has repeatedly changed hands over time, we are concerned that your rights as a Senator, to speak for your constituents on this issue, would be lost if the unprecedented "nuclear option" is enacted.

As people of faith committed to maintaining the historic separation of the institutions of religion and government, we are certainly concerned about the questionable religious liberty records of several of President Bush's nominees for the federal bench and the increasingly inflammatory rhetoric directed at "activist judges." However, whether you share our concerns or not, at a minimum we seek your commitment to a full consideration of the experience and qualification of each nominee. If the "nuclear option" is enacted, it would irreparably damage the Senate's role of advice and consent in relation to judicial nominees.

The Interfaith Alliance
1331 H Street, NW Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
www.interfaithalliance.org

Many of our forebears came to this country to escape the tyranny of a religious majority, and that experience directly informed the founding of our nation. As people of faith and good will, we affirm this democratic process that allows for full hearing of diverse points of view. We urge you to protect the U.S. Senate's constitutional role of advice and consent by opposing any efforts to eliminate a senators' right to filibuster. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kim Baldwin, Director of Public Policy and Voter Education, at (202) 639-6370.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Welton Gaddy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "W".

Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy
President, The Interfaith Alliance
Pastor of Preaching and Worship, Northminster Baptist Church (Monroe, LA)