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August 24, 2015

His Excellency Otto Pérez Molina
President of Guatemala
Guatemalan National Palace
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Ambassador Julio Ligorria Carballido
Embassy of Guatemala
2220 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear President Molina and Ambassador Carballido:

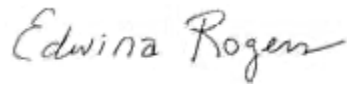
Religious devotion is sensitive, intimate, and deeply personal. When a government decides to implement mandatory religious education for all children (both in public and private schools), in a particular religious tradition at public expense, a troublesome encroachment upon the dignity of a free conscience occurs. This encroachment sends a message that the government is uniquely qualified to determine which religion is truer above all others and that the particular religious sect has a reserved privileged place. A proposed bill before the Guatemalan Congress would do just that, and the Guatemalan Humanist Association (Asociación Guatemalteca de Humanistas Seculares, or AGHS) is mounting a defense and needs our help.

According to the AGHS, over the course of the last nine months, a congressman claiming that he received ‘explicit instructions from God’ during a ‘divine revelation,’ has been planning and writing a bill proposal gathering support from local Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and organizations.” This bill would introduce weekly “Biblical Values” classes as mandatory curriculum, taught by (certified) “spiritual guide” chaplains. Students would receive a failing grade if they refused to attend this tax-payer funded, religious-indoctrination.

Protesting the bill at the Guatemalan Congress, AGHS spokesperson Carlos Mendoza spoke against the bill’s violation of the secular laws of the “National Education Act” and the “Act on the Integrity of Children and Adolescents.” Before being ejected from the building, Mendoza could barely finish a sentence with barrage of “Cast out Satan!,” “Protect the Children!,” and “Throw him out!”

Please join the Secular Policy Institute in supporting our brothers and sisters in Guatemala by opposing this bill.

Yours sincerely,



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Signatories

ARP Sociedad para el Avance del Pensamiento Crítico
Atheist Alliance International – Washington, DC, USA
Atheist Foundation of Australia – Lane Cove, New South Wales, Australia
Atheists and Agnostics of Rossmoor - Walnut Creek, California, USA
Canadian Secular Alliance – Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Centro per la Libera Ricerca - Italy
Foundation for Critical Thinking - Tomales, California, USA
Guatemalteca de Humanistas Seculares - Guatemala
Hispanic American Freethinkers, Inc. – Reston, Virginia, USA
Humanist Association of Ottawa - Ottawa, Canada
Humanist Association of Toronto - Toronto, Canada
Humanist Chaplaincy at American University - Washington, DC, USA
Humanists of Fort Worth - Fort Worth, Texas, USA
Michigan Atheists – Allen Park, Michigan, USA
Mid-West Humanists - Ireland
Muslimish - Michigan, USA
North London Humanist Group - London, UK
OMAHA (Omaha Metro Area Humanist Association) - Omaha, Nebraska, USA
Ontario Humanist Society - Ontario, Canada
Red River Freethinkers – Fargo, North Dakota, USA
San Francisco Atheists - San Francisco, California, USA
Sidmennt, The Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association - Reykjavik, Iceland
Skepticality – Alta Dena, California, USA
Sociedad Humanista-etica Argentina "Deodoro Roca" – Mendoza, Argentina
UCTAA (Universal Church Triumphant of the Apathetic Agnostic) - USA
UnitedCoR - Washington, DC, USA
Watford Area Humanists - Watford, UK