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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3303**

September 19, 2007

Acting Attorney General Paul Clement  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General Clement:

According to a September 18th report from the New York Times entitled, "Group Loses Tax Break Over Gay Union Issue," it is my understanding that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has declined to renew the tax exempt status of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association of the United Methodist Church because of that church's policy to not allow homosexual couples to hold civil union ceremonies on its premises.

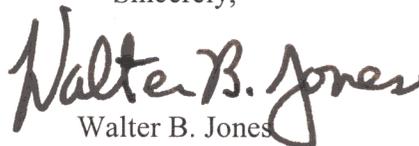
Religious freedom is a cornerstone of American constitutional rights. The Founders were wise in their inclusion of this freedom so that citizens may practice their religion as they see fit, without governmental disturbance.

The United Methodist Book of Discipline which dictates the standards of Camp Meeting Association, as well as all United Methodist Churches, specifically states: "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches." Camp Meeting Association's policy to refuse same-sex civil union ceremonies on its premises is consistent with the United Methodist Church's religious tenet and should be protected by the First Amendment's free exercise clause.

I am pleased that on February 20, 2007, the Department of Justice launched *The First Freedom Project* to highlight its work protecting religious freedom. It is my understanding that the Civil Rights Division of the Department has been tasked with vigorous enforcement of Federal statutes prohibiting religion-based discrimination in public facilities and public accommodations, as well as enforcement of The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). Your Department's commitment to the protection of religious freedom thankfully coincides with this latest trepidation of religious rights in New Jersey.

The actions of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection represent a gross violation of the constitutionally guaranteed right to the free exercise of religion. I respectfully request that the Department of Justice investigate this matter.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress