



October 13, 2010

Ministers Urge IRS to Investigate Religious Group

A group of ministers from Ohio through their organization Clergy Voice has complained to the IRS and urged it to investigate the Fellowship Foundation, a religious group that organizes the National Prayer Breakfast. The reason is that the Fellowship Foundation received money from an Islamic organization six years ago with alleged links to terrorist groups.

By receiving the money, the ministers say that the organization violated its tax exempt status. On its part, the Fellowship Foundation admitted to receiving two checks for \$25,000 in May and June 2004 from the Missouri-based Islamic American Relief Agency. This relief agency was listed in a State Finance Committee list as a terrorist financing organization in January of that year.

The Fellowship Foundation has since taken steps to more diligently scrutinize the sources of their donations. In the case of the donation from the Islamic organization, the Fellowship Foundation's President, Richard E. Carver said that the foundation had initially conducted a check on the Islamic agency and found nothing amiss. But later Carver said he had received inaccurate information regarding the check and that no check on

the agency was actually conducted.

The Fellowship Foundation is based in Arlington and is linked with a house located at 133 C St SE where many Republican members of the Senate and House of Representatives have rented rooms. The foundation said the money they received from the Islamic organization was not used or retained to fund foreign trips it had organized for some GOP lawmakers, including Sen John Ensign (R-Nev) and Tom Coburn (R-Okla).

The Islamic American Relief Agency itself was raided and shuttered by federal agents in October 2004 but has been quietly lobbying to clear its name. Federal agents' investigations led to indictments of the Islamic agency's officers. Four months ago, the agency's chief executive Mubarak Hamed pleaded guilty to the charge of bribing a lawmaker to help get the agency off the State Finance Committee's list. The bribe in question was the \$25,000 the agency paid to the International Foundation in May 2004. Carver acknowledged that this was another name for his organization.

The lawmaker in question was former congressman Mark D. Siljander (R-Mich), a prominent social activist who agreed to lobby for the removal of the agency from the list of terrorist funding organizations. The \$25,000 was payment for his services according to Hamed's plea. Siljander, who appeared in court in July, admitted to acting as the de-facto agent for the agency in meetings with lawmakers and lying to federal agents about his role.