



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, November 10, 2004

CONTACT: Gwen Fitzgerald
(202) 544-0200 x 302

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA JOINS LAWSUIT CHALLENGING
CFC REQUIREMENT TO SCREEN EMPLOYEES ON WATCH LISTS**

Statement of Chip Pitts
Chair of Board, Amnesty International USA

Amnesty International USA announced today that the organization has joined the lawsuit challenging the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) policy to check potential employees against government terrorism watch lists. The organization also decided, as previously disclosed, to forego CFC funding while this unfair, unworkable and unconstitutional requirement is in place.

The complaint clearly presents the legal arguments against this misguided and ineffectual policy. But our opposition to the policy stems also from its contradiction of basic principles that our nation has long held and that Amnesty International cherishes. Many of the charities affected provide vital services to those in need or work to protect fundamental rights. To shift what amounts to a law-enforcement function to these hard-working organizations is misplaced and out-of-line. Further, AIUSA believes that the certification requirement places a burden on fundamental human and civil rights including those of association, expression, due process and non-discrimination.

Amnesty International has stood with many of these same groups in opposing other post-9/11 Bush Administration policies and regulations, including the Patriot Act, the military commissions at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and discriminatory immigration and asylum practices. Unfortunately, this decision comes with a price tag, as our projected donations for fiscal year 2005 were \$330,000. Nonetheless, we are proud today to stand on principle with other charities in urging the District Court to rescind the CFC's watch list screening requirement.

###