



September 27, 2022

Jamie Dimon
Chief Executive Officer
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
270 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Dimon,

Last week you appeared before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and spoke eloquently of what a wonderful country we live in and about the freedoms we enjoy:

“We live in the greatest country in the world predicated on foundational beliefs in freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of enterprise, the sanctity of the individual, and the promise of equality and opportunity for all.”

You even went so far as to include religious freedom as a core value when you said “these core values are the fabric that bind us as Americans, where the best of what we are shines through, especially in times of adversity.”

While I was glad to hear you speak proudly of America and our freedoms, I am concerned that Chase Bank has failed to live up to such lofty ideals. In your testimony, you referred to religious freedom as a “foundational belief” but Chase Bank recently decided to close the account of the National Committee for Religious Freedom, a nonpartisan, multi-faith nonprofit organization dedicated to defending the right of all Americans to freely live out their faith.

The NCRF is a diverse organization representing Americans from every faith and walk of life. Our bipartisan National Advisory Board includes members who are Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Mormon, and Muslim and our Board of Directors is 60 percent minority-led.

After organizing the NCRF as a nonprofit, our executive director and I opened a bank account at JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA, in Washington, D.C. We chose Chase because of its national footprint and multi-generational banking relationships our team had with the bank. Our experience was initially very positive.

However, three weeks after opening our nonprofit business checking account, we received a letter notifying us that Chase had decided to “end their relationship” with the National Committee for Religious Freedom and that our account would be closed. The bank actually closed our account before we received the letter.

We were surprised at being canceled by Chase. When our executive director called to see if this was an error, he was informed that “a note in the file read that Chase employees were not permitted to provide any further clarifying information to the customer.”

Why the cancellation? Why the secrecy and lack of transparency? Why is Chase hiding its reasons and intentions from a client that seeks only to serve the public good and defend religious freedom for every American?

After all, as you testified, religious freedom is a core value that forms part of the fabric that binds us together as Americans. So why cancel an organization that exists to protect the most foundational of core American values?

The decision to cancel the NCRF was described by multiple Chase employees as one from the “corporate office.” It was initially explained to us by someone at the Chase corporate office that the decision was final and nonrevocable.

To this day, the NCRF still does not have a clear reason as to why our account was closed after only three weeks. We certainly hadn’t made any transactions in that short amount of time that would have triggered any regulatory red flags. When Chase closed our account, it triggered a chain reaction that led to other financial service accounts being closed and caused our new organization to experience unexpected operational and financial challenges. Thankfully, we were able to open a new account at another bank.

What shocked and surprised me the most was when someone from Chase eventually reached out to our Executive Director and informed him that Chase would be willing to reconsider doing business with the NCRF if we would provide our donor list, a list of political candidates we intended to support, and a full explanation of the criteria by which we would endorse and support those candidates. Does Chase ask every customer what politicians they support and why before deciding whether or not to accept them as a customer? Are the same standards and scrutiny applied across the board to all non-profit organizations?

Unfortunately, we do not believe this was the first time an organization has found itself facing sudden and unexplained account closures. We are concerned that religious institutions, houses of worship, and people of all faiths are at risk of having their business, credit, or even personal or private bank accounts terminated for any or no reason at all.

After our own experience with Chase, we have decided one of our initial efforts as an organization will be to identify other organizations which have faced similar treatment on the basis of their sincerely held religious beliefs. We think you will be surprised by what we will learn. In social media vernacular, other organizations like ours have been #ChasedAway, too.

If I were still in the Senate, I certainly would be asking you if you really meant what you said about religious freedom during your testimony. Do you, and the bank you lead, truly respect

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religious freedom as a core value that binds all Americans? The recent actions of Chase Bank would seem to suggest otherwise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Brownback". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

Sam Brownback
Chairman, The National Committee for Religious Freedom
U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom (2018 – 2021)
Governor of the State of Kansas (2011 – 2018)
United States Senator (1996 – 2011)