

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Witness Disclosure Requirement – “Truth in Testimony”
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)

Name: Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2008. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

none

2. Please list any entity you are testifying on behalf of and briefly describe your relationship with these entities.

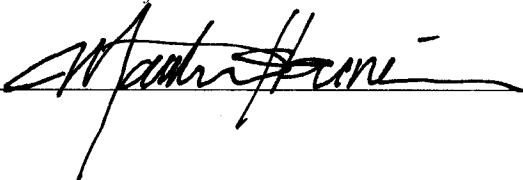
Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
President

3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received since October 1, 2008, by the entity(ies) you listed above. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

none

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature:



Date:

2-15-12



The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison **President**

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison is the 13th person to serve as president of the 2.3-million-member Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Based in St. Louis, the Missouri Synod is the second-largest Lutheran church body in North America.

Upon his election, Harrison asked for prayers and said he would “work as hard as I possibly can for unity around the clear and compelling Word of God and nothing else.”

Before becoming president, Harrison served for nine years as the executive director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. During that time, LCMS World Relief and Human Care coordinated the \$14 million LCMS response to Hurricane Katrina, and the multi-million-dollar responses to the tsunami in Asia and the earthquake in Haiti; managed relationships with some 120 LCMS Recognized Service Organizations and other inter-Lutheran social ministry organizations; worked in consultation with LCMS partner/sister churches to build capacity during numerous mercy outreach efforts; and managed LCMS pro-life efforts.

A native of Sioux City, Iowa, Harrison was baptized in a small, rural Lutheran church and raised in a large suburban congregation. Harrison served for more than a decade as a parish pastor at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Westgate, Iowa, (1991-1995) and Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. (1995-2001). During his pastorate at Zion in Fort Wayne, his parish embarked on the St. Peter/Zion Project for Neighborhood Renewal, a now nationally-recognized neighborhood revitalization effort. Owing to the success of this effort, Harrison later founded the National Lutheran Housing Support Corp., which is a faith-based housing organization headquartered at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis that helps revitalize communities and renew neighborhoods across the country.

Currently, Harrison serves on the board of Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Services in America. Previously, Harrison served on the LCMS Board for Mission Services (1998-2001), Fort Wayne Urban League Building Committee (1999) and the LCMS President’s Church Relations Cabinet.

Harrison graduated with a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1984. Following graduation, Harrison and his wife Kathy spent a year as missionaries in a remote Canadian Cree Indian village with the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots. Harrison received a Master of Divinity degree in 1989 from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., and a Master of Sacred Theology degree from the same institution in 1991. Harrison also has pursued additional graduate study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

Harrison has authored, edited and translated numerous articles and several books, including two volumes titled *The Lonely Way: Selected Essays and Letters* by Hermann Sasse (Concordia Publishing House). He is also the compiler and translator of *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, a collection of works of some of the founders of the LCMS; the author of *A Little Book on Joy*, a devotional-style book about finding delight in living a Christ-centered life in a today's society; and *Christ Have Mercy: How to Put Your Faith in Action*, a book that urges Christians to consider the innumerable opportunities we have to show mercy to fellow Christians and to anyone God places in our path.

Harrison and his wife live in Ballwin, Mo., and are members of Village Lutheran Church in Ladue, Mo., where he also serves as assistant pastor. They have two sons. Harrison is an avid bluegrass banjo player and builder of guitars, banjos and mandolins.

February 16, 2012

Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, and other members of the committee:

Thank you for your public service to our nation, and thank you for the opportunity to share our church's concerns regarding the recent federal mandate.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is apprehensive. Our church's history is rooted in religious liberty. Our Lutheran forefathers left Europe seeking religious freedom in America, and since their arrival in 1837, Missouri Synod Lutherans have rigorously guarded these beliefs and practices. We are unconditionally committed to preserving the essential teachings of our faith, to guard our religious rights, and to act as conscience dictates as informed by faith.

The recent federal mandate has prompted our church to voice public concern about federal intervention into religious beliefs and practices. Specifically, we object to the use of drugs and procedures used to take the lives of unborn children. We oppose this mandate since it requires religious organizations to pay for and otherwise facilitate the use of such drugs by their employees—a requirement that violates our stand on the biblical teaching of the sanctity of life, which is a matter of faith and conscience.

Furthermore, we believe and teach that freedom of religion extends beyond mere houses of worship. We must be able to exercise our faith in the public square and, in response to Christ's call, demonstrate His mercy through our love and compassion for all people according to the clear teachings of Holy Scripture.

We deem this recent government mandate as an infringement upon the beliefs and practices of various religious communities. Therefore, we voice our public objections in solidarity with those who cherish their religious liberties. The decision by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to require virtually all health plans to comply with this mandate will have the effect of forcing many religious organizations to choose between following the letter of the law or operating within the framework of their religious tenets. We add our voice to the long list of those who have championed their God-given right to freely exercise their religious beliefs according to the dictates of their faith, and to provide compassionate care and clear Christian witness to society's most vulnerable, without government encroachment.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a church body of sinners redeemed by the blood of Jesus, has affected the lives of millions of people by providing aid, housing, health care, spiritual care and much more. Our church has been a proponent for good in this nation—promoting education (our congregations operate the nation’s largest Protestant school system), upholding marriage, and providing people with the tools and assistance to be good citizens.

Furthermore, we follow St. Paul’s admonition to pray for governing authorities as “God’s servant for good” (Romans 13:4). Therefore, we pray for our President and those in authority. We encourage our sons and daughters to serve our nation in uniform—some achieving the highest enlisted and commissioned ranks in the armed forces. Our people have faithfully and honorably served Congress and the Senate.

We cherish our nation; yet, we grow increasingly uneasy with government intrusions into Christian conscience and practice. We stand united with our religious forefathers who sought first to serve the kingdom of God, and we will stand with all who share these concerns against the erosion of our religious liberties. May God grant us wisdom and His peace.

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod