

Director resigns from faith-based office: Jay Hein steps down to care for ill father

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The director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Jay Hein, has resigned to care for his ill father, who is battling cancer. Hein, the White House office's third director, will leave August 29 and return to Indianapolis, said spokesperson Rebecca Neale.

Hein alerted his staff and state liaisons to religious and secular nonprofits during the week of August 11 and met with President Bush earlier to tell him of his plans.

Asked if Hein would be replaced, Neale said, "I think that that's something the White House senior staff is working through right now."

Hein, 43, had led the office for two years. The office, which Bush started soon after becoming president, was previously led by University of Pennsylvania political science professor John Dilulio and Saint Vincent College president Jim Towey.

"I think Jay was instrumental in expanding the president's vision for the initiative outside of Washington," said Neale. "He helped demonstrate how the initiative is alive in all 50 states."

Hein hosted monthly roundtable discussions that brought together government, religious and business leaders and philanthropists in Washington and led national and international conferences aimed at highlighting partnerships between nonprofits and the government.

Hein was named in the *Hein v. Freedom from Religion Foundation* case, which the Supreme Court decided in the White House's favor in June 2007. That ruling, which insulated the faith-based initiative from taxpayer legal challenges, has played a role in a series of subsequent court decisions. -*Religion News Service*