



Broomfield Baptist Church
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Testimony of the Senior Pastor of Bromfield Baptist Church, Inc.
IN SUPPORT OF HB16-1123, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OF CERTAIN RELIGIOUS PERSONS
Before the State Affairs Committee
February 8, 2016

What this issue means to me is that it speaks directly toward the protection of my abilities as a religious leader to continue to operate according my sincerely held religious beliefs in the community I serve. It would afford me the great ease of conscience to know that our State governing documents not only clarify but protect what has already but only up to this point been assumed, namely, that I, as a religious leader should never be subjected to any civil, criminal or otherwise action by this State should I refuse to violate my sincerely held beliefs when it comes to the kinds of services, accommodations, or goods that I may render in the course of my religious pursuits.

As has been previously acknowledged by statements made in the highest court of our land (see Section 1, (b) of bill), there is no question that these issues now need to be spelled out clearly in our governing documents in order to protect religious leaders and religious organizations from ever being penalized for refusing to offer any services that would potentially violate what they believe. This issue is so fundamentally part of the roots that make us American, the freedom to practice our religion reasonably without fear of Government imposition.

Personally, I feel it rather silly that such a no-brainer like this needs further consideration. Should this bill fail to make it, I would be very troubled to entertain the notion that we have legislators who might be willing to allow the possibility of the State using intervention against me, should I deny services that violate my sincerely held religious beliefs. Troubling indeed.

Please help to ease not only my personal conscience, but also the consciences of other religious leaders, by voicing your affirmation for protecting our liberties to practice our sincerely held religious beliefs with your kind support for HB16-1123.

Sincerely,

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Testimony Before The Colorado House State, Veteran and Military Affairs Committee
February 8, 2016

Good afternoon, Madam Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to address you on HS.16-1123.

I am a Baptist pastor. My forebears throughout the history of the American people have a storied and well-deserved reputation for standing for religious freedom, even at great personal risk. Roger Williams, who stood against the church-state alliance in the Massachusetts Colony, was banished for his efforts. A number of Virginia Baptist pastors refused to pay the tax to support the state church and suffered imprisonment for their principled stand. The Danbury, Connecticut Baptists corresponded with Thomas Jefferson on the issue of the church-state relationship in the Constitution, and happily did not suffer official consequences. Among others, these all paved the way for the religious freedoms we enjoy as Americans today.

The issue then was: will the government support one religion over another at the expense of and to the detriment of those who do not submit to the favored government line. The eventual answer was a resounding "No!". The issue today is: will the government favor a group of people who seek to impose their view of religion at the expense of the sincerely held beliefs of others who do not share their opinion. This bill seeks to ensure that religious freedom will not be infringed on the basis of gender or sexual preference. Before anyone suggests this bill is not necessary, consider the following:

- * In Hutchison, KS, an ordinance was proposed in 2012 that, had it stood, would have required churches and religious non-profits to perform same-sex ceremonies on the basis of broadened "public accommodation" laws.

- * Christian wedding chapels in Iowa and Idaho have been shuttered because they refused to perform same sex weddings.

- * The mayor of Houston, an open lesbian, subpoenaed sermons from churches whose pastors opposed her strong agenda of homosexual accommodation.

- * Pastors in other parts of the world, including Sweden, Scotland and Canada, have been fined and/or imprisoned for taking a stand on this issue.

- * The Canadian Supreme Court has ruled that Biblical references to homosexuality are "hate speech"...and many in positions of governmental authority in the US concur.

- * In Obergefell v. Hodges last year the Supreme Court found that people with religious objections to same sex marriage had the right to "advocate" and "teach" (their words), but carefully avoided the use of the term "exercise" opening the door to official abuse and many additional court rulings to clarify the decision. Solicitor General Donald Verrilli, arguing for the government's position, admitted that tax exempt status for religious institutions was "...certainly going to be an issue..."

On the basis of this and voluminous other evidence, I believe the long and honorable history of religious freedom in the United States is in jeopardy. For that reason, I would like to strongly encourage this committee to move HS 16-1123 forward. Please protect the freedom of religion in Colorado.

Thank you.

This Texas law passed 142-0 in their state house. Would you support an identical bill in the Colorado House/Senate?

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S.B. No. 2065

TO GET AN OFFICIAL INVITE.

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the rights of certain religious organizations and
3 individuals relating to a marriage that violates a sincerely held
4 religious belief.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION.1. Chapter 2, Family Code, is amended by adding
7 Subchapter G to read as follows:

8 SUBCHAPTER G. FREEDOM OF RELIGION WITH RESPECT TO RECOGNIZING OR
9 PERFORMING CERTAIN MARRIAGES

10 Sec. 2.601. RIGHTS OF CERTAIN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS. A
11 religious organization, an organization supervised or controlled
12 by or in connection with a religious organization, an individual
13 employed by a religious organization while acting in the scope of
14 that employment, or a clergy or minister may not be required to
15 solemnize any marriage or provide services, accommodations,
16 facilities, goods, or privileges for a purpose related to the
17 solemnization, formation, or celebration of any marriage if the
18 action would cause the organization or individual to violate a
19 sincerely held religious belief.

20 Sec. 2.602. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION
21 PROHIBITED. A refusal to provide services, accommodations,
22 facilities, goods, or privileges under Section 2.601 is not the
23 basis for a civil or criminal cause of action or any other action by
24 this state or a political subdivision of this state to penalize or

1 withhold benefits or privileges, including tax exemptions or
2 governmental contracts, grants, or licenses, from any protected
3 organization or individual.

4 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
5 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
6 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
7 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
8 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2065 passed the Senate on
May 11, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 21, Nays 9.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2065 passed the House on
May 22, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 0, one
present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

// signed into law //

Governor