

The Columbus Dispatch

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Arizona flap stops Ohio religious-freedom bill

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By [Jim Siegel](#) & [Alan Johnson](#)

The Columbus Dispatch • Thursday February 27, 2014 7:56 AM

Comments: 21

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The proposed “Ohio Religious Freedom Restoration Act” has been derailed by its sponsors because of concerns that it might discriminate against gay Ohioans in a manner similar to a controversial bill in Arizona.

“We never started out with some idea of giving people the right to discriminate. That doesn’t work in this country,” said Rep. Bill Patmon, a Cleveland Democrat who jointly sponsored the bill with Rep. Tim Derickson, R-Oxford. “If anybody knows me and knows my record, they know I’ve fought discrimination.”



REQUEST TO BUY THIS PHOTO

Rep. Bill Patmon, left, and Rep. Tim Derickson

Shortly after Patmon and Derickson announced they wanted the bill withdrawn, Rep. Jim Butler, R-Oakwood, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said that “no future consideration will be given to H.B. 376.”

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Concerns about the bill were raised by FreedomOhio. Ian James, the group’s executive director, said House Bill 376 is “dangerous and eerily similar to the Arizona legislation.”

That bill, passed by Arizona state legislators, would have restricted the ability of the state to enforce anti-discrimination laws if they impinged on religious freedom. For example, business owners would have gotten the right to refuse service to gays.

The bill garnered widespread support but equally broad criticism, including from Republicans Mitt Romney and Sen. John McCain. Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer vetoed it last night.

The Ohio bill was introduced in December with the support of Republicans and Democrats, as well as religious leaders and organizations.

In a joint statement, the sponsors said the intent of the bill was to protect Ohioans’ “ability to freely worship and preventing any laws from burdening the free exercise of religion.” But with the controversy in Arizona, they said it was best to drop it.

Patmon said some interpret the bill as allowing people in business to discriminate based on religious beliefs.

“Maybe the language is too loose,” he said. “Maybe it does need some work. We intend to do work on it and make sure it’s the right kind of bill.”

A variety of religious groups, including the Catholic Conference of Ohio, Ohio Council of Churches and Agudath Israel of America, have publicly supported the bill.

Jim Tobin, associate director for the Catholic Conference of Ohio, said the intent of the bill is to ensure there is a compelling state interest before something violates a person's religious preferences.

As a recognizable religious organization, Tobin said, "Our intent is never to unjustly treat somebody. Our belief is to say: 'Our beliefs need to be respected.'"

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OATHKEEPER OATHKEEPER (DISPATCH2012)

Surprised that what the H@ll, Rick has not posted yet. I heard he wears very light colored slippers.

flag

2014-02-26 12:27:57.0

RONALD L SOLOVE (REACKSHUNARY)

Oathkeeper, your bigoted trolling just never stops. And you continue to hide your hatred and ignorance behind a phony name. Don't you have enough courage to spout your stupidity under your real name?

flag

2014-02-26 14:40:13.0

STEVE NORDEN (STEVE.NORDEN@GMAIL.COM)

I believe that the head covering Jewish men wear is spelled yarmulke or kippa.

flag

2014-02-26 15:02:08.0

SUSAN RILEY (SULEE)

From the article: "Our intent is not to make it any different than to mirror what the federal law is doing. We're not trying to open up new issues." If a federal law already exists, then isn't writing a state law moot?

flag

2014-02-26 15:11:58.0

OATHKEEPER OATHKEEPER (DISPATCH2012)

flag

SOLOVE aka What the H@ll, aka Rick I do not know what bigoted means. I do know you are not posting with your real name. DISPATCH PLEASE MAKE ON POSTERS USE THEIR FACEBOOK ACCOUNT TO POST. THE PANAMA CITY FLORIDA NEWS HERALD REQUIRES THAT AND THE POSTINGS HAVE GONE DOWN BY TWO THIRDS. I WOULD GET A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT JUST TO "front out Rick" as I know he operates off of three computers and changes names on them by the hour. He posts 24/7/365

2014-02-26 16:32:13.0

KEITH FINN (AVERAGEGUY)

I suggest taking this excellent quiz to see if your religious freedom is being infringed. flag
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-emily-c-heath/how-to-determine-if-your-religious-liberty-is-being-threatened-in-10-questions_b_1845413.html

2014-02-26 17:02:56.0

KEITH FINN (AVERAGEGUY)

Oathkeeper, you are a very tiresome person. flag

2014-02-26 17:03:50.0

BOB KOWALSKI (BOBKOW)

Once again, courtesy of The Dispatch comments section, we see solid evidence for why we all should support mental health. flag

2014-02-26 19:36:14.0

GREGORI STEINWAY (PAXCHRISTI)

BOBKOW--agree with your comment. I think Rick may have a multiple personality, and from time to time, I think I may be one of the Ricks, but can't be sure. I guess that is what makes the multiple personality thing interesting. Probably will hear about it again shortly. flag

2014-02-26 20:48:54.0

OATHKEEPER OATHKEEPER (DISPATCH2012)

What the H@ll Rick, I worked with you, talk about tiresome and short stature on top of it. Bo ho she has general work to do so she kicks you to the curb. flag

2014-02-26 21:07:25.0

JERRY BURNS (JMIDLANDER70)

A further incentive to address bully problems, both at the community and global levels, like the favored tactic of purposely bumping into someone and asking, "You try'in to start something", as demonstrated by the claim that there's ".. a war on religion" thereby giving them "cause" to retaliate. Sad that those of a belief system so lacking in socially redeeming value continually try to force themselves on others. History is drenched in the bloody results from such impositions. flag

2014-02-26 22:40:40.0

NOWA RINO (GUS2)

The religious are not uber-citizens deserving of special rights. flag

2014-02-27 05:03:00.0

NOWA RINO (GUS2)

In fact, a report by the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute produced some rather striking findings. According to the report, not only do most religiously unaffiliated Americans now support same-sex marriage, but so do most white mainline Protestants, white Catholics, Hispanic Catholics and Jews. Most Americans across the ideological spectrum, including even a majority of Tea Party supporters, support protecting gay men and lesbians from workplace discrimination, and most Americans believe that discrimination faced by gay people is greater than that faced by Muslims, blacks, women or Jews. The group the participants said faced the least amount of discrimination was evangelical Christians -- the current campaign to portray them as an aggrieved and embattled class notwithstanding. flag

2014-02-27 05:18:25.0

RICHARD STEWART (RSTEWART2@WOH.RR.COM)

How is even consideration of religion and law not a violation of the 1st Amendment to the Constitution?

flag

2014-02-27 10:45:13.0

RECONCILE RECONCILE (RECONCILE)

Wait a minute Gregori, I though I was Rick. How many freaking Ricks are there out there and would the real one please stand up? I'd like to meet the guy.

flag

2014-02-27 12:21:11.0

RECONCILE RECONCILE (RECONCILE)

And to our legislature, please focus...Jobs, Ohio?

flag

2014-02-27 12:22:45.0

WENDY HUBBLE (WHUBBLE)

In these United States, RELIGIOUS freedom should never trump CIVIL rights. That's what a bill like this is meant to do and that is WRONG.

flag

2014-02-27 12:50:08.0

WENDY HUBBLE (WHUBBLE)

Nowa Rino, Thank you for your posts. Very enlightening.

flag

2014-02-27 12:52:57.0

DANIEL MCCORMICK (MCCORMICK)

Actually, I'd worry if the anonymity was not protected or offered on these sites. While the name calling is galling (coming from both the left and right) there is a long history of using anonymity, even within our Founding Fathers, that had to publish under a pseudonym to protect them from the backlash. Having been on the receiving end of backlash for being against outrageous tax issues, I can sympathize.

flag

2014-02-27 13:06:05.0

GREGORI STEINWAY (PAXCHRISTI)

Like I said REC, I thought I might be Rick too. We must be a multiple personality, and don't know our other personalities as well as we should. If I seem confused, I am.

flag

2014-02-27 14:42:31.0

RECONCILE RECONCILE (RECONCILE)

Gregori, actually I feel sorry for the guy (Oathkeeper, well, Rick too). I really do hope and wish folks who need help or are disturbed in some way (and I know there may be one or two on this board that may think I do), get assistance.

flag

2014-02-27 15:01:25.0