

Updated Apr. 17, 2015 at 7:36 a.m.

IBM tells McCrory it opposes NC Religious Freedom Restoration Act



By RICK SMITH, WRAL TechWire Editor

Tags: [IBM](#), [Employment](#)

In a letter to Gov. Pat McCrory from Robert Greenberg, IBM's senior executive in North Carolina, the tech giant spells out "strong opposition" to North Carolina's proposed N.C. Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The bill "would enable discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation or identity," Greenberg wrote.

The bill has been introduced in both the House and Senate where it was referred to committees after passing "first reading" on March 26 in the House and March 30 in the Senate. The bills [prohibit state laws that "burden" a person's ability to follow his or her religious beliefs.](#) The definition of "person" includes religious institutions, businesses and associations.

"IBM is opposed to discrimination against anyone on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation or religion. We urge you to work with the Legislature to ensure that any legislation in this area is not discriminatory," Greenberg wrote.

Similar bills have triggered waves of protests in Indiana and Arkansas where the legislation was later revised.

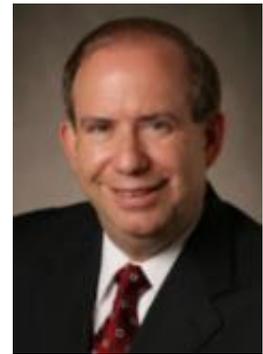
IBM, which employs several thousand people in Research Triangle Park, is one of numerous major technology companies where executives, include Apple and Cisco, have spoken out against these bills. They say the bills encourage discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities (LGBT).

McCrory in a recent radio interview in Charlotte expressed opposition to the bill. McCrory said many of the policies expressed in religious freedom bills "make no sense."

Greenberg cited McCrory's remarks in the letter which is headlined: "IBM Letter Opposing North Carolina's Religious Freedom Restoration Act"

"I am writing to express IBM's strong opposition to S.B. [Senate Bill] 550, the North Carolina Religious Freedom Restoration Act. We welcomed the reports of your opposition to the bill, and wanted to make you aware of IBM's point of view on this important matter," Greenberg wrote in a letter dated April 7.

"IBM has a large number of employees and retirees in North Carolina and is gravely concerned that this legislation, if enacted, would enable discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation or identity. We call on members of the Legislature to defeat this bill.



"Our perspective is grounded in IBM's 104-year history and our deep legacy of diversity and inclusion — a legacy to which we remain strongly committed today. IBM is opposed to discrimination against anyone on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation or religion. We urge you to work with the Legislature to ensure that any legislation in this area is not discriminatory."

Greenberg is not alone among N.C. technology executives.

Jim Whitehurst, chief executive officer of Red Hat, also has spoken out against what he calls "divisive" rights legislation.

IBM sent a similar letter to Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana where a similar religious freedom bill is under consideration.

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Hey IBM. Do you sell your products to countries which openly discriminate against gays and lesbians? Or even countries which behead persons who are even suspected of being gay? I happen to know for a fact that you do and you know what these countries do. You are not driven by concern for this legislation, but by financial profit. You are such hypocrites.

thunt

April 17, 2015 12:14 p.m.

Applause to IBM for their opposition against this discriminatory bill.

ccsmith1902

April 17, 2015 11:27 a.m.

But, it's okay for IBM to discriminate against, i.e., target their older employees every time there's a round of layoffs? What hypocrites!

joedibari

April 17, 2015 10:55 a.m.

Mike - Very funny. Unfortunately, their 104 years of diversity and inclusion does not apply to white male christians. They are a targeted group for termination as they are not part of the diversity schedule of the politically correct.

Perhaps coming up from the books and seeing what is going on is better than reading a politically correct story is best.

admyank

April 17, 2015 10:50 a.m.

So its ok to discriminate against Christians!

jasonconaway6969

April 17, 2015 10:21 a.m.

admyank.....you're exactly right. Can anyone say "re-og"?

fgarnerwlmstemp

April 17, 2015 10:01 a.m.

Admyank.....maybe reread the story again....just a bit slower.. "in IBM's 104-year history and our deep legacy of diversity and inclusion" I applaud these Corporations for stepping into the ridiculous world of the GOP and the Right wing's attempt to suppress those they feel aren't worthy.... As Corporations are People too.....Money and Jobs carry a Big Stick...and donations....if they know what's good for them they would drop this like the live grenade that it is!

mikehrt

April 17, 2015 8:44 a.m.

Yeah - unless you are a white male - IBM is against discrimination.

admyank

April 17, 2015 8:21 a.m.

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