

# State of Vermont

## House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

### House Resolution

H.R. 8

House resolution expressing strong opposition to state religious freedom restoration legislation that authorizes discrimination based on sexual orientation

Offered by: Representatives Davis of Washington, Gonzalez of Winooski, Poirier of Barre City, Ancel of Calais, Berry of Manchester, Burke of Brattleboro, Carr of Brandon, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Cole of Burlington, Eastman of Orwell, Hebert of Vernon, Hooper of Montpelier, Jerman of Essex, Krowinski of Burlington, Lippert of Hinesburg, McCormack of Burlington, Olsen of Londonderry, Pearson of Burlington, Russell of Rutland City, Stevens of Waterbury, Toleno of Brattleboro, Townsend of South Burlington, Trieber of Rockingham, Troiano of Stannard, Young of Glover, and Zagar of Barnard

Whereas, on March 26, 2015, Governor Mike Pence of Indiana signed Senate Bill 101, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, that addresses public and private sector actions related to religious practices, and

Whereas, many organizations and individuals have interpreted the Indiana legislation, and criticized it strongly, as granting private businesses, based on an owner's religious beliefs, the right to discriminate against individuals who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and

Whereas, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which is headquartered in Indianapolis, has expressed concern how the legislation might affect student-athletes and NCAA employees, and

Whereas, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees has cancelled plans to hold its 2015 Women's Conference in that city, and

Whereas, on Tuesday, March 31, 2015, the *Indianapolis Star* newspaper ran a front-page editorial with a bold headline stating "FIX THIS NOW," and

Whereas, also on Tuesday, March 31, 2015, Governor Mike Pence announced the law would be amended to clarify that the law "does not give businesses the right to deny services to anyone," and

Whereas, despite this promise, opponents of the law in Indiana are demanding its repeal and not amendment, and

Whereas, aside from the enacted Indiana law, there is similar legislation under consideration in approximately a dozen states, and

Whereas, on Monday, March 30, 2015, Governor Dannel Malloy of Connecticut signed Executive Order No. 45 restricting “state funded or state sponsored travel to states” that have enacted legislation such as Indiana’s Religious Freedom Act, “unless necessary for the enforcement of state law, to meet contractual obligations or for the protection of public health, welfare and safety;” and also providing the that the travel restriction continues for any state as long as that state’s law remains in effect, and

Whereas, on March 31, 2015, Secretary of Administration Justin Johnson sent an e-mail directing all Executive Branch agencies and departments not to send employees on State-funded or State-sponsored trips to Indiana until further notice, now therefore be it

Resolved by House of Representatives:

That this legislative body expresses its strong opposition to Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act as signed into law on March 26, 2015, and expresses its support for, at a minimum, enactment of the proposed clarification and, preferably, for the law’s repeal, and be it further

Resolved: That this legislative body requests Governor Peter Shumlin to broaden the application of the directive issued on March 31, 2015, to apply to any state that adopts a law similar to Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and urges the Judicial and Legislative Branches of State government to adopt a similar policy, and be it further

Resolved: That the Clerk of the House be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Peter Shumlin, Chief Justice Paul Reiber, Speaker of the House Shap Smith, and Senate President Pro Tempore John Campbell.