



## WHY YOU SHOULD OPPOSE THE FIRST AMENDMENT DEFENSE ACT OF GEORGIA

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The First Amendment Defense Act of Georgia (SB 284), introduced by Sen. Greg Kirk, would allow individuals, businesses, and government-funded organizations to discriminate against Georgians based on a belief that “marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman or that sexual relations are properly reserved to such a marriage.”

**FREEDOM OF RELIGION IS A FUNDAMENTAL AMERICAN VALUE THAT IS PROTECTED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT.** It allows all of us the freedom to believe or not as we see fit. This bill, however, does not advance the First Amendment, but instead distorts the meaning of religious freedom in order to allow discrimination against others.

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**THIS BILL ALLOWS TAXPAYER-FUNDED DISCRIMINATION** against same-sex couples, unmarried couples, married couples in which one or both people had been married before, single mothers, all individuals who have had sex outside of marriage, and others.

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**THIS BILL WOULD ALLOW PRIVATE BUSINESSES, MEDICAL PROVIDERS, AND LICENSED PROFESSIONALS TO DISCRIMINATE** against same-sex couples, unmarried couples, married couples in which one person had been married before, single mothers, all individuals who have had sex outside of marriage, and others.

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### THIS BILL WOULD SANCTION:

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#### **DISCRIMINATION BY GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS AND GRANTEES:**

The bill would allow organizations that receive government grants and contracts to discriminate in who they hire or serve. For example, a homeless shelter or food bank that receives state money could refuse to serve a same-sex couple or single mother in need. A state taxpayer-funded child placement agency could refuse to place children with a same-sex couple.

#### **DISCRIMINATION BY FOR-PROFIT BUSINESSES:**

The bill would prohibit enforcement of non-discrimination laws against individuals or for-profit businesses that claim a religious objection. For example, this bill would prohibit the government (state or local) from enforcing fair housing laws when a landlord illegally refuses to rent to an unmarried couple or an unwed mother. Or it could prevent enforcement of family medical leave laws if a business denies gay and lesbian employees the ability to care for a sick spouse.

#### **DISCRIMINATION IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:**

The bill would allow students training to be counselors, psychologists, or psychiatrists at public colleges, universities, and medical schools to withhold important—and possibly lifesaving, healthcare service—from patients. For example a psychologist in training could refuse to serve a suicidal patient who is married to someone of the same sex or who isn't married but lives with her boyfriend.

**THIS BILL WOULD MEDDLE IN THE GOVERNANCE DECISIONS OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING AND ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS** by preventing them from requiring that their members adhere to best practices and standards when such practices prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status.

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