

New Texas Law Seen as Huge Victory for Religious Freedom

When it comes to adoption, putting children with same-sex couples often leads to a fierce debate.

A lesbian couple in Michigan is suing the state after two Christian adoption agencies turned them away because they are gay.

"I'm very lucky to have very supportive friends and family, and I work in a very supportive environment," said Kristy Dumont.

"I really have not faced any discrimination over being gay, so calling the agencies and being told that it's our policy not to place kids with same-sex families was pretty hard to hear," she said in a video produced by the ACLU of Michigan.

Texas Law Protects Faith-Based Adoption Agencies

In order to prevent such lawsuits in Texas, lawmakers passed a bill that would protect Christian adoption agencies for refusing gay couples.

Faith-based operations make up 25 percent of the child-placing agencies in Texas.

Over the past few years, many faith-based groups stopped taking cases from the state's foster care system, fearing their biblical view of marriage would clash with the LGBT community.

In an interview with CBN News, Scott Collins, senior vice president of Buckner International said, "Your religious convictions should not deny you the opportunity to care for children."

Buckner, an evangelical charity in Dallas, serves more than 1,000 Texas children each year.

"There's just not enough places for them," explained Collins.

"We've had children who've had to sleep on the floor of offices because there was nowhere to take 'em that night or the next night."

The recently passed Freedom to Serve Children Act protects groups like Buckner if they refuse to place children with gay couples.

Collins said, "We believe that God's design for a family is a man and a woman. That's our biblically held belief and so, based on that, and with a number of other faith-based providers here in Texas, and obviously with the support of legislature and the governor of Texas, we have been able to secure this extra layer of protection for us to be able to really live out our biblical convictions."

Texas Law Under Fire from LGBT Community

But the law has drawn fierce backlash from the LGBT community.

The state of California added Texas to its list of states banned from travel to conduct state business, claiming those states have laws that promote sexual discrimination.

The discrimination claim includes Alabama, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Dakota and Tennessee.

"To travel to these states at state expense would mean that we would be using taxpayer dollars to support these states and we think it would be an offense to all those individuals in America who feel this scourge of discrimination," said Xavier Becerra, California's attorney general.

Dumont argues that refusing gay couples makes it difficult for children to be placed in loving homes.

"It affects the children because there are so many other couples like us out there who want to provide a home for these kids and are being told no because of this," she said.

Law Seen as Major Victory for Religious Freedom

Supporters of the Texas law disagree.

"At the end of the day what we're trying to get is more homes and I don't think this prevents more homes from coming from any sector of society from coming to the table," said Texas Rep James Frank, the bill's sponsor.

Meanwhile, Christians who feel their beliefs on marriage and family are increasingly attacked see the law as a major victory for religious freedom.

But Collins maintains it's also about saving lives

Bottom Line: What's Best for the Children?

"For us what it comes down to is what about the children?" he said.

"Do they win? Is this a win for the children? Not for any group or organization. It really is about the kids."

He said he is just thankful the new law allows them to continue helping the state's most vulnerable.

"We believe this is a very inclusive law," he said.

"We're not saying in any way that some people are bad and shouldn't be parents. We're just saying this is what we believe. These are sincerely held religious convictions that we have, and we want to continue to do what we've done for 138 years now."

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