

Republican National Committee Urges Congress to Support Legislation Protecting Religious Liberty

The Republican National Committee has passed a resolution calling for Congress to approve the First Amendment Defense Act. The legislation and resolution are in response to the Supreme Court's recent ruling on *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. Critics of the ruling say the Supreme Court failed to allow for religious liberty protections for individuals and business owners who feel that participating in a same-sex wedding ceremony would violate their beliefs. Supporters say the ruling was intended to end discrimination against gay and lesbian individuals and couples. The legislation was introduced in the House by Rep. Raúl Labrador, R-Idaho, and in the Senate by Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah. In a joint statement in June, Lee and Labrador said the legislation would "strengthen religious liberty protections in federal law." "There's a reason the right to religious liberty appears first in our nation's Bill of Rights," Lee said. "The freedom to live and to act in accordance with the dictates of one's conscience and religious convictions is integral to human flourishing, serving as the foundation upon which America has produced the most diverse, tolerant, and stable society the world has ever known." "Our bill ensures that the federal government does not penalize Americans for following their religious beliefs or moral convictions on traditional marriage," Labrador said. "Our bill shields against federal intrusion without taking anything away from anyone. In a shifting landscape, it's time that Congress proactively defend this sacred right." Ellen Barrosse, the RNC Chair of the Conservative Steering Committee, told *The Daily Signal* in an

interview that the resolution is “an attempt, for those of us who are people of faith, to protect religious organizations.” She said that the legislation introduced by Lee and Labrador would offer protection for Americans who are trying to practice their faith. “Does Catholic Charities have to place children with gay couples, or will they have to shut down?” she asked. “This is a free market, there are other agencies that will place children with them.” Barrosse dismissed the argument that religious liberty protections allow for discrimination. “Americans abhor discrimination.” You can read the RNC’s resolution below:

Resolution in Support of The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution Whereas, The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was written to prohibit the federal government from taking discriminatory action against a person on the basis that such person believes or acts in accordance with a religious belief or moral conviction; including that: (1) marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman, or (2) sexual relations are properly reserved to such a marriage; Whereas, The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution should therefore protect Americans from the action of a narrow 5 to 4 majority of the Supreme Court who have upheld gay marriage without regard to the democratic rights of the people or the states, and without any religious liberty protections; Whereas, The Chief Justice of the United States, John Roberts, has pointed to the serious religious liberty consequences that may stem from the decision: “Today’s decision ... creates serious doubts about religious liberty . . . Indeed the Solicitor General candidly acknowledged that the tax exemptions of some religious organizations would be in question if they opposed gay marriage;” Whereas, Many Americans, including Melissa Klein, Kelvin Cochran, Baronelle Stutzman, Angela McCaskill, Brendan Eich, Frank Turek, Scott McAdams, Tom Emmer, Jack Phillips, Elaine Huguenin, Betty and Richard Odgaard, Cynthia and Robert Gifford are losing their livelihoods or are being

disciplined for courageously dissenting from gay marriage orthodoxy; Whereas, Many on the Left exhibit an intensifying hatred and intolerance for gay marriage dissenters; and Whereas, Religious schools, colleges and universities, and other charities, could lose their First Amendment rights and their right to equal access to government benefits, including 501(c)3 status, student aid, and government contracts; therefore be it Resolved, The Republican National Committee urges Congress to pass and the President to sign The First Amendment Defense Act to protect the rights of believers to equal treatment by the government of The United States of America.

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