

Voters Concerned Respect for Marriage Act Will Open Pandora's Box of Litigation Against Christian Businesses

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A majority of voters polled in a recent survey say they approve of the Respect for Marriage Act recently passed by both the House of Representatives and Senate. Yet half of those voters say they are concerned about what impact the new law codifying same-sex marriage could have on religious freedom in America.

This week, Rasmussen Reports released the results of a national survey and found that 62% of 1,000 U.S. voters are in favor of the Respect for Marriage Act. The act replaces existing provisions under federal law to recognize marriage between two individuals as valid under state law.

When the Senate voted 61-35 last week to pass the bill, Ryan Bangert of the Alliance Defending Freedom, a Christian legal advocacy group, said the bill's passage will open up a Pandora's Box for legal action against Christians and conservative values like we have never seen before.

On Thursday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation 258-169 that would codify same-sex marriage protections into law, despite opposition from most GOP lawmakers who argue the bill's language infringes on religious freedoms, reported. The bill will now be sent to President Biden for signature.

Bangert says the new law "intentionally jeopardizes the religious freedom" of millions of Americans who have sincerely

held beliefs about traditional marriage.

“This dangerously cynical and completely unnecessary bill is a direct attack on the First Amendment,” Bangert says. “It does nothing to change the legal status of same-sex marriage anywhere. But it undermines religious freedom everywhere and exposes Americans throughout the country to predatory lawsuits by activists seeking to use the threat of litigation to silence debate and exclude people of faith from the public square.

“The Senate has chosen to disregard legitimate concerns about the undeniable harms of this bill. If the Senate truly cared about protecting religious freedom, it would have included comprehensive amendments proposed by Sens. Lee, Rubio, and Lankford. ADF remains committed to ensuring the First Amendment protects the rights of all Americans and to defending those who will likely be targeted because of this legislation.”

When asked if they agree with Bangert’s statement, 50% of voters said that they did, with 36% responding that they strongly agree. Thirty-nine percent of participants said that they disagreed with Bangert’s statement and 26% said that they strongly disagree with it. Another 12% of participants said that they weren’t sure.

But will this mean for the baker, the florist or any other business who refuses to serve a same-sex wedding based on their biblical beliefs?

While it doesn’t force churches to perform or host same-sex ceremonies, religious freedom advocates say it will target faith-based organizations and individuals who refuse to serve gay couples due to their religious convictions.

Dr. Michael Brown, a political analyst and columnist for Charisma News, says “To the core of my being, I am committed to loving my LGBTQ neighbors and protecting them against

discrimination, hostility and attack. But in conscience before God, I cannot affirm as right what God does not affirm. What this bill actually shows is that religious liberty champions must sell their souls and compromise their ethics in order to work out an acceptable deal with LGBT advocates."

Liberty Counsel says that the "so-called Respect for Marriage Act fails to provide protection for people or organizations with sincerely held religious beliefs about marriage," is unconstitutional and will "trample upon religious freedom."

"It will undermine the 303 Creative case's currently before the U.S. Supreme Court and will force individuals who engage in artistic expression to violate their religious convictions concerning marriage. Congress has absolutely no authority to regulate marriage within the several states." {eo}

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Shawn A. Akers is the online editor at *Charisma Media*.