

Colorado's 'Godless' Bill Under Fire

A bill advancing in Colorado could make it illegal to refer to someone by the wrong pronoun or use their birth name—an idea supporters say protects transgender individuals, but one that faith leaders call “godless” and a threat to religious freedom and parental rights.

House Bill 1312 would add “misgendering” and “deadnaming” to Colorado’s Anti-Discrimination Act if it becomes law. It has passed the House and now awaits a Senate vote that could send it to Gov. Jared Polis’s desk.

The bill defines “misgendering” as intentionally referring to someone using a different pronoun, while “deadnaming” means purposely using their birth name rather than their chosen name. At the center of the controversy is a provision calling on courts to consider a parent using either of those toward their child as coercive control in custody cases.

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Critics charge this could put parents in the backseat when it comes to raising their own children.

“Well, first and foremost, it harms children. There’s just no doubt about it,” said Brent Leatherwood, President of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“It makes the state of Colorado this sort of safe haven for this radical transgender insanity,” Leatherwood continued. “Moreover, it tries to insert the state in really horrible ways between parents and children.”

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Meg Kilgannon of the Family Research Council also expressed concern, saying, “This bill regarding parental rights is really, really concerning – saying that, if a parent does not adopt a name that a child chooses for him or herself, that if a parent calls them by a name they gave them the day they were born, that that parent is guilty of child abuse – and that the implications of that is a child could be removed from custody.”

Meanwhile, supporters like Rep. Yara Zokaie call it a vital step to protect transgender-identifying individuals from harassment and threats. “Colorado is increasingly seen as a refuge for trans and queer folks,” said Zokaie. “This bill will protect parents in states that are increasingly criminalizing the very act of seeing your child for who they are.”

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In a bulletin insert for Colorado churches, the ERLC states: “If passed, this bill will force people to use language that violates their consciences and religious beliefs. It would also expose individuals, ministries, and religious organizations to legal action for simply affirming a biblical worldview of sex and gender.”

Faith leaders and conservative activists rallied at the Colorado State Capitol, standing against what they call “the woke gender mob.” And national Baptist leaders flew into Denver to join local churches in calling for the defense of children, faith, and free speech.

“I’m just gonna say one thing to the Devil ... this is God’s state,” said Sean Cole of Emmanuel Baptist Church.

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