

Proponent Testimony on Bill Number, L-132-0102

February 21, 2017

My name is Daniel Berdine, I am the Pastor of Greenville Baptist Temple in Greenville, Oh. Last year in unprecedented manner, the United States Supreme Court in a 5-4 decision handed down a ruling legalizing homosexual unions with indifference to the states' laws.

Because of this decision organizations and businesses have suffered persecution and law suits which have in many cases destroyed everything they had. As Pastors, or more importantly, Christians, we recognize, from the Scriptures that Christ died for all. That includes me and every human being, including members of the LGBT community. Therefore we love all. But we cannot celebrate everything men have contrived to do. We do ask in sincerity to hold our allegiance to God, not celebrate it, or say what God has not said. If God created man, marriage, and the church, we intreat, do not ask us to put "God's Blessing" on what God has not called marriage. It is in violation of our worship and dignity of man.

America has long stood for this personal soul liberty. When she became a nation, the idea was somewhat novel to the current world that the Muslim, Jew, Christian, Quaker, and deist could all live side by side and quietly, or loudly, worship, so long as it did not disrupt the personal peace of another. When the Baptists of Danbury beseeched Thomas Jefferson for Religious liberty in 1798, they sought that the law did not keep them from fulfilling their obligations, and they were met with much reassurance. We seek the same reassurance.

With the threats to Religious liberty, the time has come to enact statute legislation in Ohio to address these new challenges. No individual should be coerced against their religious conscience. No Religious Society should be forced by the state to violate their religious beliefs. For this reason we urge the passage of the Pastor's Protection Act.

Please do not ask us to do what we cannot do. We must obey God. Because of this, we love all, we pray for all, we respect all. But we cannot bless what God has not blessed. We must take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in our mouths. We Must obey God.

Thank you Chairman and members of the committee.