



November 26, 2018

To the Respected Members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of the Pastor Protection Act, HB 36.

As a minister of the gospel concerned with the fundamental issues of religious liberty and the freedom of conscience, I wish to express my profound concern that these staples of American jurisprudence receive continued support and affirmation from the Ohio Senate. The concern for these First Amendment freedoms stands independent of any opinions or concerns regarding the issue of same-sex marriage. It is enough to simply advocate for the freedom of religion.

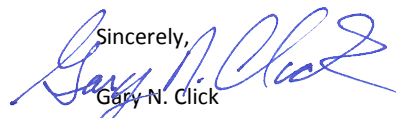
Like many others, I have been bewildered by the confusing messages from the opponents of this bill. On one hand they say that it is not necessary because our religious freedoms are already protected. My first instinct was to agree with this position. However, there are also opponents who suggest that a church, as a public accommodation, must surrender its First Amendment rights and perform services contrary to its long held, fundamental beliefs based on Scripture. Should I believe them when they say they support our religious freedom or when they say they oppose it?

Recent history informs us that the militant wing of the LGBT movement is not content to *live and let live*. Rather, they seek to impose their own religious views concerning marriage and other social issues upon those who respectfully disagree. Not all LGBT advocates take this position. However, the significant impact of the militant wing is a force to be reckoned with. This has been demonstrated in multiple instances but none more revealing than in the case of Jack Philips and the Masterpiece Cake Shop.

Mr. Philips won his case at the Supreme Court and yet a well-funded, militant faction of the LGBT movement continues to persist in litigation against him. It should be noted that the Supreme Court found that he did not discriminate against homosexual customers but in fact sold products to them as he would to any other customer. The conflict arose when he was invited to use his artistic skills to celebrate a same sex marriage, in violation of the teaching of Scripture. As a Christian, Mr. Philips could not celebrate this union with a clear conscience and recommended others who could and would do so. If past is precedent, we must believe them when they tell us that they are now targeting churches.

Contemporary cases like this suggest that there is a severe intolerance among militant LGBT groups for those whose religious views diverge from their own. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Ohio legislature to affirm the constitutional protections of law by providing additional barriers against religious bigotry directed at Ohio's pastors and congregations. It would be negligent to assume that there is not indeed an increasing intolerance against Christians and churches who maintain a biblical worldview and attempt to live according to the historic and orthodox teachings of Scripture concerning marriage and sexuality. Therefore, I urge you to support H.B. 36, the Pastor Protection Act.

Thank you for your service and thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

Gary N. Click

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