



CLEVELAND BAPTIST CHURCH

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Monday, November 26, 2018

Statement to be presented to the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee on HB 36 (Pastor's Protection Act)

My name is Kevin Folger, and I am the Senior Pastor of Cleveland Baptist Church, in Cleveland, Ohio, where I have served for almost 41 years.

HB 36 is important to me and should be to every pastor in Ohio. Recently, the Cuyahoga County Council passed a Human Rights Ordinance (**Ordinance No. O2018-0009**). This ordinance created a Human Rights Council which has the power to investigate “so called” discrimination and added sexual orientation and sexual identity as a protected class. Thus, any perceived discrimination directed toward the LGBTQ community could be subject to this commission.

The LGBTQ community has an agenda to get non-discrimination ordinances passed across the country. Cuyahoga County was targeted because, while the city of Cleveland had passed non-discrimination legislation, there were many communities in the county that had not, and probably, would not. Our county council gladly took up the cause of the LGBTQ community and purposely did not allow for a religious exemption.

If a person is found guilty of “so called” discrimination, this commission has the power to levy fines and can also make the guilty party pay attorney fees. The amazing thing is that churches and pastors are not exempt from this legislation.

While I don't think anyone should be discriminated against, this kind of discrimination is given special status. If a man decides he is a woman, all of sudden he can have special rights. He can walk into a woman's restroom or shower facility and anyone stopping him from doing so could be accused of discrimination. This could occur at any of our church services if we refused to allow it to happen. As the pastor of the church, I could be held personally responsible and brought before this Human Rights Council and tried on a charge of discrimination.

When I preach what the Bible teaches about sexual orientation and gender identity, it could be considered offensive and discrimination. I am of the persuasion that LGBTQ community is not going to be satisfied until everyone accepts and approves of their lifestyle choices, and anyone disagreeing with them is the enemy and will be targeted.

While I would be gracious to anyone that enters our church, I could never approve of the LGBTQ lifestyle knowing what the Bible teaches. Nor could I allow someone of that lifestyle to be a member of our church. My position is considered by the majority in the LGBTQ community as biased, moronic and idiotic. We have been called these very names by Cleveland's Scene Magazine in article published on September 13, 2018, when we opposed the Cuyahoga County Human Rights Ordinance.
<https://www.clevescene.com/scene-and->

heard/archives/2018/09/13/parade-of-ignorant-idiots-show-up-to-cuyahoga-county-council-to-oppose-lgbtq-protection-ordinance

These are the reasons I am asking you to pass HB 36 out of committee and on to the floor for a full vote. It would be my hope that the entire Senate would pass this legislation to protect pastors from being targeted simply because they believe, preach and practice what the Bible teaches.

Thank You!

Dr. Kevin Folger

Pastor

Cleveland Baptist Church