

Press Release

From: Matthias Beier, Ph.D., President, Indiana Society for Psychoanalytic Thought

President of Indiana Psychoanalysts Opposes RFRA

As President of The Indiana Society for Psychoanalytic Thought (ISPT), a local chapter of Division 39 of the American Psychological Association (APA), in consultation with the Executive Committee of ISPT, I oppose the so-called Religious Freedom Restoration Act of Indiana (RFRA), signed into law by Governor Mike Pence, because of its potential to make discrimination easier and legal, unless it is amended to explicitly protect against discrimination. Psychoanalysts and psychotherapists witness daily that discrimination has harmful psychological and social effects. I am particularly troubled by the fact that powerful Indiana lobbyists for SB 101, who were at the signing ceremony, publicly state they plan to use this law to deny service to members, friends and families of the LGBTQ community without legal consequences. I oppose this legislation as is in accordance with APA's 2007 [Resolution on Opposing Discriminatory Legislation & Initiatives Aimed at Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Persons](#). My opposition to RFRA does not diminish my support of religious liberty but rather signals a commitment to ensure a psychologically and relationally responsible and healthy expression of such liberty.

Indiana's current RFRA, which is notably different from the federal as well as most other state RFRA's, is harmful because it fosters a climate of fear and increases the likelihood of discrimination by emboldening private individuals and business owners to refuse services to certain groups of persons. Specifically, without civil rights protection for gay and lesbians enshrined in Indiana law, the current language explicitly allows such individuals and business owners to use the law as a shield from lawsuits against discriminatory acts, thus opening Hoosiers to psychosocial harm. I call on the state of Indiana to repeal the discriminatory legislation of RFRA (SB 101) as is or to amend it to include explicit protections against discrimination because it currently stands in direct violation of APA policies.

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