



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 31, 2012

Anchorage Prop 5 Would Place Religious Convictions at Risk, Opponents Warn

But pro-family leaders and legal experts warn that the initiative could endanger the liberties of individuals and groups who are morally opposed to homosexuality and who object to “transgender” behavior. A series of 30-second television ads produced by [Prop 5 opponents](#) depict what could happen to morally minded individuals who run afoul of the city’s municipal code if the gay-rights “anti-discrimination” language is added.



One of the spots features “Steve,” who owns a gym in Anchorage. The ad warns that “if Proposition 5 passes Steve will be forced to open the women’s locker room to anyone who claims a female identity.” The ad goes on to show the dilemma business owners like Steve would face under Prop. 5. “If Steve says yes” to transvestite customers trying to crash the women’s dressing room, “he’ll lose customers,” the ad explains. But “if he says no, he can be fined or imprisoned.” The ad emphasizes that “Anchorage is already a tolerant city. Vote ‘No’ on Proposition 5.”

A second ad depicts the manager of a daycare in a similar predicament when she refuses to hire a transvestite job applicant.

Proponents of Prop 5 protested that the cartoon ads were in poor taste and immediately mounted a campaign to pressure local television stations to refuse to run them. Trevor Storrs, a spokesman for the pro-homosexual One Anchorage campaign, charged that the ads were “offensive, stigmatizing, and distorted,” adding that the negative portrayal of “transgender” individuals “is definitely fanning the flames of fear that can lead to hate and violence.”

But Jim Minnery of [ProtectAnchorage.org](#), which produced the ads, defended the spots and their message. Minnery noted that the term “transgender” isn’t even defined in the ordinance, meaning that there exists huge potential for an open-ended enforcement, which has pro-family forces alarmed. “I think it’s a shocking flaw in Prop 5 and shows profound disrespect to voters that the authors didn’t feel it was important to provide a definition of transgender identity,” Minnery told the [Anchorage Daily News](#).

He added that while the cartoon ads may depict “transgender” individuals in a stereotypically comical



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way, they do grab the attention of viewers and get his group's point across effectively. "You kind of have to cut to the chase," he said. "You have 30 seconds."

In a statement Minnery explained: "Here's the real reason why they want to ban our ads. They bring home truth in a very winsome, compelling manner. Opinions, actions, and decisions which once would have been upheld as 'common sense' will instead be declared as 'bigotry' and banned by law."

In an editorial published in the [Anchorage Daily News](#) Minnery warned that, despite assurances by Prop 5 proponents that churches and faith-based non-profits would be protected by existing religious exemptions, the measure could nonetheless result in "widespread and pervasive harm on religious liberty, affecting — among others — employers, employees, businesses, professionals, membership organizations, community groups, religious entities, and educational institutions."

He added that the warning goes beyond mere speculation. "In communities across the country where similar measures have passed, religious freedoms are being taken away," he wrote, citing such examples as a wedding photographer in New Mexico who was ordered by the court to pay a lesbian couple more than \$6,000 after he refused to photograph their "commitment" ceremony.

He also recalled that the archdioceses of both Boston and Chicago "were forced to go out of the adoption business when they determined that their religious beliefs precluded them from fostering or encouraging the placement of children with same-sex couples."

Writing on [Townhall.com](#), Austin Nimocks, senior legal counsel with the conservative legal advocacy group [Alliance Defense Fund](#) (ADF), said the insistence by Prop 5 proponents that the addition of "sexual orientation" and "transgender identity" to Anchorage's existing municipal code would not endanger religious freedom "demonstrates a woeful ignorance of the legal landscape where these provisions have been enacted across the country." He pointed out that with new groups to "protect" which the original municipal code never anticipated, come new and previously unanticipated dangers to religious individuals, groups, and even business owners who have crafted their business practices around their religious and moral convictions.

Nimocks wrote that ADF has received calls from business owners around the nation needing legal assistance because of assaults prompted by "anti-discrimination" measures such as Prop. 5. "These businesses all have competitors that customers can use," he wrote, "but they are being targeted because someone doesn't like what they believe and will use the sword of the state to extract their pound of flesh — all in the name of 'tolerance,' naturally."

Added the conservative legal advocate: "The lack of tolerance for religious and moral beliefs in Proposition 5 should put every citizen of Anchorage — and America — on edge. No one should be forced to celebrate behavior that directly conflicts with their beliefs."



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