



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 2, 2019

Calif. Assembly Approves Resolution That Calls for Church Acceptance of LGBTQ

The California State Assembly voted 9-2 to send to the state senate a resolution calling on “religious leaders to counsel on LGBTQ matters from a place of love, compassion, and knowledge of the psychological and other harms of conversion therapy.”

While no one would argue with the aim of being more loving and more compassionate in our counsel of our fellow man, the people’s representatives do not possess any authority in the arena of religious practice.



Article I, Section 4 of the California Constitution reads, in relevant part: “Free exercise and enjoyment of religion without discrimination or preference are guaranteed. This liberty of conscience does not excuse acts that are licentious or inconsistent with the peace or safety of the State. The Legislature shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.”

Regardless of those restrictions, lawmakers in the California Assembly have chosen to ignore their state’s constitution and to introduce a measure that, should it ever become binding law, would drastically shrink the scope of religious liberty in the Golden State.

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 99 authored by Assemblyman Evan Low seems to sidestep the state constitution’s guarantee of “free exercise and enjoyment of religion.”

Perhaps legislators in California would rather lose religious liberty than lose the votes of the so-called LGBTQ community.

Facts and fidelity to constitutional oaths (don’t forget that state legislators are required by Article VI of the U.S. Constitution to support that document) are so far from the fantasy world inhabited by these lawmakers, that the text of ACR 99 all but places blame on religious groups for suicide rates among those people identified as LGBTQ. The resolution declares: “The stigma associated with being LGBTQ often created by groups in society, including therapists and religious groups, has caused disproportionately high rates of suicide, attempted suicide, depression, rejection, and isolation amongst LGBTQ and questioning individuals.”

That’s right. Representatives in California point to the pulpit and the pastors that preach from them as the causes of depression and suicide among those tortured souls who feel compelled — for one reason or another — to fight against the genetic verities of their gender.

In the next paragraph of the resolution, the madness marches on: “In a pluralistic society, people differing along spectrums of political and religious perspectives share a common responsibility of protecting the health and well-being of all children and vulnerable communities.”

Here’s a question: Wouldn’t a pluralistic society by definition disagree on what their respective



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responsibilities would be toward “vulnerable communities?” In fact, wouldn’t the many members of such a society likely disagree as to what would qualify as “vulnerable?”

The answer to anyone committed to reason would be “Yes.” But to those who believe themselves on the cusp of controlling churches and outlawing disagreement with the decadent, there is no commitment to reason, there is only a rush to regulate religion — religion that doesn’t meet their multicultural muster — out of existence, a least on the Left Coast.

The faithful, thankfully, are not sitting idly by while their most basic liberties are under barrage by the irreligious and irrational members of the state assembly.

“Everyone deserves respect in this discussion and dialogue about what kind of counseling should be allowed in California. But to join in a document ... that really slanders the church and slanders good counselors and good patients. It’s unexplainable and it’s really inexcusable,” said Roger Gannam, vice president of legal affairs for Liberty Counsel, as reported by CBN News.

“We have a track record,” said Gannam. “We have actual patients and clients who have benefitted from therapy to help them with their unwanted attractions. We’ve helped them change their lives. We’ve helped them to live heterosexual lifestyles with strong and healthy marriages and so it’s really a slander against them to say that this practice is somehow unethical and harmful.”

As to the harm or help brought about by so-called conversion therapy, that is a matter for those more educated in those matters than I.

What I can say with certainty, however, is that conversion therapy involving minors has been illegal in California since 2012!

With that fact in mind, it doesn’t take Sherlockian insight to see what is the real reason for this latest attack on Christianity. It’s just that: an attack on Christianity.

As Nicole Russell writes in the *Washington Examiner*, “Since conversion therapy is already banned, it’s clear this resolution is meant to pave the way for penalizing religious communities in California, for standing up for what they believe in, a direct violation of their First Amendment rights.”

Russell’s recognition of the state assembly’s obvious animosity toward the church and those who believe in that institution’s ability to assist them in living better lives is echoed by more than two dozen counsellors, Christian leaders, and laymen who report being brought happiness through adherence to the tenets taught at church. The group wrote a letter condemning the resolution, which they insist denies Californians of their constitutionally protected freedom of conscience. The parties who penned the letter wrote:

Religious freedom is an inalienable right recognized within the context of America’s religious heritage; it rests upon the insight that human beings of every kind are endowed with equal worth because each and every one of us bears the glorious image of Nature’s God. Every person in California, therefore, is entitled to the freedom to develop their own sense of identity whether traditionally unto God or not. Religious leaders have the Constitutionally protected right to teach religious doctrine in accordance with their faith, and politicians have no right to tell clergy what is moral, dictate the content of their sermons, or instruct them in religious counseling.

Were the 64 assemblymen currently signed on as cosponsors of ACR 99 genuinely interested in protecting a pluralistic society, wouldn’t they logically avoid any effort — even nonbinding ones — to squelch opposing viewpoints? Logically, yes, but as the text of this resolution makes crystal clear, the



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authors and sponsors of this measure aren't given to behaving logically.

It should be restated that in its current form, the resolution has no legal teeth. Should the state senate follow the example of their colleagues in the state assembly and approve ACR 99, the measure could, after completion of certain parliamentary procedures, metastasize into a bill that could become law and change forever the fate of the faithful in California.

While this is unlikely to happen, it will be much less likely if men and women of faith in California communicate their opposition to this resolution and any additional — more legally binding — attempts to mandate the message preached, professed, and practiced by believers.

I'll give the last word, as I always try to do, to one of our Founding Fathers. In this case, it's counsel Thomas Jefferson included in his Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom written in 1779: "That to suffer the civil Magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty; because he being of course Judge of that tendency will make his own opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with, or differ from his own."

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