



Obama's New LGBT Edict Outrages Conservatives, Christians

Christian leaders and pro-family organizations are sounding off over President Obama's July 21 executive order that requires all entities contracting with the federal government to extend workplace protections to LGBT individuals. As reported earlier by [The New American](#), Obama warned that he would enact the unconstitutional order if the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives did not follow up on the Democrat-controlled Senate's earlier passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), and despite diligent requests from [Christian colleges and non-profits](#), Obama refused to provide an exemption to religious organizations — which had been included in the Senate-passed version of the ENDA.



"Thanks to your passion and advocacy and the irrefutable rightness of your cause, our government — the government of the people, by the people, and for the people — will become just a little bit fairer," said Obama, playing to the crowd of LGBT activists gathered at the White House for the signing ceremony. "We're on the right side of history," he exulted.

While Obama's new executive order lets stand President Bush's 2002 order permitting federal contractors that are also religious institutions to hire employees who share their religious convictions, "the rub," explained Jack Kenny in *The New American*, "is that it will not allow religious groups to fire or refuse to hire persons whose advocacy of or engagement in aberrant sexual conduct they regard as sinful and a violation of moral principles and practices that are at the core of what the religious organizations are established to promote."

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Among the liberal groups applauding Obama's actions was the ACLU, whose director, Anthony Romero, declared that the order represented "one of the most important actions ever taken by a president to eradicate LGBT discrimination from America's workplaces. By signing this order, President Obama is building on a bipartisan tradition, dating back over 70 years, of barring discrimination without exception when taxpayer dollars are involved."

Likewise, Chad Griffin of Human Rights Campaign declared that Obama had taken "unprecedented and historic executive actions to advance LGBT equality in this country and around the world."

By contrast, conservative, pro-family, and Christian leaders accused Obama of taking aim at the religious liberties protected by the First Amendment. Peter Sprigg, senior fellow for policy studies at the [Family Research Council](#), observed that Obama's executive order will force Christian and other



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 22, 2014

religious groups to compromise their moral and spiritual convictions to align with Obama's pro-homosexual agenda. "President Obama has ordered employers to put aside their principles, and practices in the name of political correctness," Sprigg said in a statement. "This level of coercion is nothing less than viewpoint blackmail that bullies into silence every contractor and subcontractor who has moral objections to homosexual behavior."

Sprigg predicted that the order would arm LGBT activists with "a license to challenge their employers and, expose those employers to threats of costly legal proceedings and the potential of jeopardizing future [federal] contracts."

He noted that one's faith "is not simply a matter of intellectual affirmation but of active practice. A religious organization which is denied the power to require its employees to conduct their lives in a way consistent with the teachings of their faith is an organization which is being denied the right to exercise its religion, period."

In an interview with [Fox News](#), Sprigg said that "the mask is coming off of the homosexual movement's agenda. They really do not believe in religious liberty. They want forced affirmation of homosexual and transgender conduct to trump every other consideration in the workplace — including religious liberty."

Kristen Waggoner, senior counsel for the conservative legal advocacy group [Alliance Defending Freedom](#), said that the executive order was "the latest example illustrating that the very government the Constitution charges with protecting religious freedom is now the primary threat to religious freedom."

Waggoner accused the Obama administration of bypassing Congress and declaring by edict "that the only religious non-profit organizations it will do business with are those willing to line up with the administration's doctrine and theology on sexual behavior. That's the kind of government entanglement with religion that the Founders sought to prevent and that the First Amendment prohibits."

Earlier this month, a group of 14 religious leaders penned a letter to Obama urging him to exempt from the anticipated executive order those religious organizations that would be forced to choose between compromise or possible ruin if they refused to follow the edict. "Without a robust religious exemption ... this expansion of hiring rights will come at an unreasonable cost to the common good, national unity, and religious freedom," reads the letter, which was sent to the White House the day after the U.S. Supreme Court's Hobby Lobby decision.

The letter's signers — which included the head of Catholic Charities USA, the executive editor of the magazine *Christianity Today*, and evangelical pastor Rick Warren — insisted that they do not approve of discrimination, writing that they believe "all persons are created in the divine image of the creator, and are worthy of respect and love, without exception. Even so, it still may not be possible for all sides to reach a consensus on every issue. That is why we are asking that an extension of protection for one group not come at the expense of faith communities whose religious identity and beliefs motivate them to serve those in need."

As reported earlier by [The New American](#), not only did Obama ignore the concerns of the religious leaders, but the signature on the letter of one of the leaders, Gordon College president D. Michael Lindsay, has prompted the government to retaliate with a review of the college's accreditation.

The [Boston Globe](#) reported that the letter prompted the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' (NEASC) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, the region's higher education accrediting agency, to initiate a review to determine "whether its standards are being violated by



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Gordon College after the Christian school's public opposition to hiring protections for gays and lesbians shed light on its longstanding policies prohibiting gay activities among students, faculty, and staff."

Focus on the Family education expert Candi Cushman wrote that the assault on Lindsay and the 125-year-old evangelical college he oversees reveals a "disturbing trend" that is beginning to spread across the nation. "If you dare to openly acknowledge a biblical viewpoint on sexuality and relationships," wrote Cushman, "you are likely to become a candidate for censorship, ridicule, or even punishment. All that the college president did was sign on to a very graciously written letter ... asking for protections for religious freedoms, especially when it comes to a Christian college trying to do what it's always done — and that is uphold a biblical standard of conduct for relationships and sexuality."

A number of conservative Christian leaders anticipate that the executive order will be successfully challenged on the grounds that Obama has overstepped his constitutional authority, as well as that the order is a violation of constitutionally protected religious freedoms. "This president claims that he has powers beyond what the Constitution confers to him because he has a phone and a pen," observed Robert Muike of the [American Freedom Law Center](#). "So apparently he's using his pen now to essentially draft federal legislation which is the sole province of Congress. He does not have the authority as an executive to make laws. His job is to faithfully execute them — and he has failed that miserably."

Muise said he anticipated "challenges to the implementation of this policy that might prohibit religious organizations from having government contracts because of their religious beliefs. And I expect those government actions will be challenged on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act."

Photo of President Obama signing new executive orders: AP Images



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