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“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

1 Peter 1:3–4

Indiana Becomes Battleground for Religious Freedom

Last Friday, Indiana’s Governor Mike Pence signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), making Indiana the [20th state](#) to have such a law that provides protection for the religious liberty of individuals. The first RFRA was introduced by Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer and was signed into law in 1993 by President Bill Clinton. Historically, the law has enjoyed strong bipartisan support. The purpose of the law is to provide a framework for individuals to challenge overreaching government activities that infringe on their religious liberty. However, since Governor Pence signed the law for Indiana, a firestorm of criticism has erupted claiming it was an “anti-gay” bill that allowed individuals and businesses to discriminate against and deny service to homosexuals. To add to the controversy, big businesses including Apple, Ely Lily, Angie’s List—and even the NCAA—have expressed caution about expansion in Indiana based on what they perceive to be a discriminatory law. However, none of the supposed problems that opponents claim the bill will create have ever happened under the RFRA laws already in place on the federal or state levels. In fact, the law has [served to protect](#) the religious liberty of Native Americans, Muslims, and many others from various religions. Governor Pence and other conservative leaders have made a concerted effort to correct the misinformation that has been spread about the law. In an [op-ed](#) published in the *Wall Street Journal*, Pence defended the law, explaining that “RFRA only provides a mechanism to address claims, not a license for private parties to deny services. Even a claim involving private individuals under RFRA must show that one’s religious beliefs were ‘substantially burdened’ and not in service to a broader government interest—which preventing discrimination certainly is. The government has the explicit power under the law to step in and defend such interests.” He also cited Douglas Laycock, a professor at the University of Virginia Law School who supports same-sex marriage but recently offered this [defense of RFRA](#): “The proposed Indiana RFRA would provide valuable guidance to Indiana courts, directing them to balance religious freedom against competing interests under the same legal standard that applies throughout most of the land. It is anything but a ‘license to discriminate,’ and it should not be mischaracterized or dismissed on that basis.” In the face of the growing controversy, Governor Pence announced Tuesday that while the law will not be changed the state legislature will consider additional legislation that will [clarify](#) what the bill does and what it will not do. Also on Tuesday, the Arkansas state legislature [passed](#) a version of RFRA, but Governor Asa Hutchinson has requested the state legislature recall and revise the bill so that it better mirrors the federal language before he signs it into law.

California University Discriminates Against Christian Group

Chi Alpha, a Christian student group at the California State University, has been ["derecognized"](#) by the university due to the group’s requirement for that leaders be professing Christians. In an interview with CBS Sacramento, Cal State Associate Vice President Tim Lynch deemed Chi Alpha’s leadership requirements to be

discriminatory. He explained the policy regarding faith-based student groups by stating, “What they cannot be is faith-based where someone has to have a profession of faith to be a leader. Every club is allowed to establish its own standards for how its leaders are elected as long as it’s non-discriminatory.” When asked in a separate interview about the requirements, Bianca Travis, President of the Chi Alpha chapter, responded, “How can someone lead us if they don’t share our mission?” The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, the same law firm that argued the Hobby Lobby case, has agreed to provide legal services for the students.

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACCS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Freedoms, A True Measure of a Generation’s Greatness](#)

[What's Gone Wrong With Democracy](#)

[School District Violates Christian College Students’ Rights](#)

[Congressional Letter to Navy on Religious Protections for Military Chaplains](#)

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