

Executive Order from page one

marriage is between one man and one woman," said Jindal. "We don't support discrimination in Louisiana and we do support religious liberty. These two values can be upheld at the same time.

"Indeed, we celebrate diversity of belief in Louisiana. Diversity of belief and religious liberty are the foundation of our law and Constitution and they should be protected. As long as I'm Governor, we will fight to protect religious liberty and not apologize for it," said Jindal.

The executive order means the 20 agencies that fall under the executive branch, including the Department of Revenue, Department of Insurance, Department of Transportation and Development and Department of Health and Hospitals, must abide by the rules set

forth in it.

The intent of bill (HB 707) was designed to block the government from pulling licenses, tax benefits, and the like from a company because of the owner's view of same-sex marriage. The sponsor of the legislation, State Rep. Mike Johnson, R-Bossier City, said Jindal's executive order reflects parts of an amended version of his bill.

"I applaud Gov. Jindal for this Executive Order. It will go a long way to preserve the most fundamental freedom of all Louisianians which is our religious liberty," said Johnson.

With the Supreme Court's imminent ruling on a landmark same-sex marriage case set for June 18, Johnson said he felt his legislation was necessary as there would be an increasing number of con-

flicts "between the old idea of religious freedom and new changing ideas about marriage."

"As was just mentioned a few weeks ago in oral arguments at the U.S. Supreme Court, it is incumbent upon every state to address this important issue as soon as possible," Johnson continued. "This is a good resolution for our state for now."

However, the House Civil Law and Procedure Committee did not agree and defeated the measure when legislators voted 10-2 to return the legislation to the calendar after hours of testimony from both sides including Louisiana Baptists' Executive Director David Hankins and Louisiana Family Forum's President Gene Mills.

"Thank you to all who signed the petition and supported the position statement put forth by me, Dr. (Steve) Horn, and Dr. (David) Goza," said Hankins. "While the hesitancy of our representatives is disappointing, I am thankful the governor signed an executive order which will provide protection for people of faith who live out their convictions."

Gene Mills, President of Louisiana Family Forum, said, "We are very disappointed in the fact Rep. Neil Abramson, D-New Orleans and chairman of the committee, did not even extend the courtesy of allowing Rep. Johnson to place his amendments on the bill.

"Rep. Johnson did everything possible to answer

the spectacular claims of the opponents and to make his bill clear and concise, but the chairman, aided by Rep. John Bel Edwards (D-Amite), motioned to return the bill to the calendar before the author could amend his bill," said Mills.

"By voting with the chairman today, the House Civil Law committee effectively ignored two-thirds of Louisiana voters, endorsing both the state's ability to discriminate and the LGBT advocacy groups. The website www.LA4Liberty.com has registered over 500 businesses and 1,000 citizens in Louisiana in support of the bill. These voices were ignored by today's committee vote," Mills concluded.

Louisiana Family Forum Vice President Rick Edmonds wrote in a statement, "We are so grateful for a victory today for marriage and family. We are equally grateful for a victory for Louisiana and all of America.

"We want to say thanks to you. While religious freedom in America is being attacked on every corner, believers like you in Louisiana continue to make a difference. Many of you have been praying, signing petitions, speaking to legislators, informing friends and even making your way to Baton Rouge to make a difference. Congratulations, your hard work and prayers have paid off," wrote Edmonds.

Equality Louisiana, an LGBT advocacy group, and Louisiana Progress Action issued a joint statement con-

demning Jindal's Executive Order saying it would only hurt the state's economy.

"It is shameful that Gov. Jindal has decided that abusing his executive power to accomplish the goals of House Bill 707, even after it was tabled indefinitely by our legislature today, is worth more effort than fixing our disastrous state budget. He may have forgotten what every day Louisianians value the most, but the testimony today against HB 707 should have reminded him. Discrimination is not a Louisiana value."

However, a poll taken by Louisiana Family Forum on May 14 and May 17 indicated that a majority of voters in Louisiana supported the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience act by a margin of over two to one (67 to 25 percent).

Moreover, voters from nearly all key demographic groups in Louisiana overwhelmingly supported the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act.

In 2004, 78 percent of Louisianians amended the constitution to affirm traditional marriage.

However, officials from both the Louisiana tourism and business industry strongly opposed the bill according to a story in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

In testifying against the bill, New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau CEO Stephen Perry called it "a radioactive, poisonous message for

See **EXECUTIVE ORDER** on 11

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