

## **Faith Leaders Denounce Trump's Rumored Anti-LGBTQ Executive Order**

Dear President Trump,

As clergy and faith leaders who serve diverse communities across the United States, we write to you to express our deep concern over the draft religious freedom executive order that some have urged you to sign. Although it purports to strengthen religious freedom, what this order would actually do is misuse this freedom, turning it into a weapon to discriminate against broad swaths of our nation, including LGBTQ people, women, and children in foster care. We urge you to turn away from all proposals that would abuse religious freedom, including any executive orders on this issue that are currently under consideration.

The religious freedom upon which our nation was founded has allowed our country's diverse religious landscape to flourish. The draft executive order flies in the face of that rich diversity by enshrining one religious perspective--on marriage, gender identity, health care, and the role of houses of worship in partisan politics--into law, above all others. This is neither what religious freedom means in the eyes of the law, nor what religion itself means to millions of Americans of faith.

The religious freedom of individuals and organizations, including that of clergy and houses of worship, is already protected by the First Amendment and federal law. Additionally, we as clergy and faith leaders, stand by the right of anyone to hold beliefs that may differ from our own.

For many of us, supporting LGBTQ individuals and families is a principle of our faith, and that needs to be respected as well.

Furthermore, freedom of religion guarantees us the right to hold any belief we choose and to act on our religious beliefs, but it does not allow us to harm others in the name of those beliefs. We are appalled by the widespread discrimination that this draft order would unleash across all areas of life--including in some cases with taxpayer dollars--on our congregants, our neighbors, our families, so many Americans we may never personally know, and indeed even many of us personally.

As people of deep faith committed to a country that supports robust religious expression, and in the spirit of equality and justice, we urge you to return to the true meaning of religious freedom. We must never allow this precious freedom to be used to discriminate against broad swaths of our nation, including LGBTQ people, women, and children in foster care. We urge you to refrain from issuing this executive order or any substantively similar policies on their own, or as amendments to existing executive orders.

Sincerely,

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Atlanta

Ms. Laura Welch  
The Temple  
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Rev. Ben Wells  
St. Francis Episcopal Church  
Macon

Deacon Kevin Tuttle  
Danielsville

Rabbi Dan Medwin

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<https://www.clergyunitedagainstdiscrimination.org/>