



Keystone Christian Education Association

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Dear Senator Baker, Senator Tartaglione, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present comment to the Committee and by implication to the full Senate and Legislature. The topic before us is one of importance to the institutions that I represent and to the citizens of Pennsylvania who populate and thus compose these institutions. The KCEA was founded in 1974, centering on the need to promote Christian education – in the church, in the Christian school, in the home, in the para-church organizations, in society.

For many citizens of Pennsylvania and certainly, for our members, religion is much more than a nice activity to do inside a House of Worship. I assure you that for many Pennsylvanians, their religion is an integral part of their very being. Accordingly issues of employment are inseparable from any other issue of faith as the Holy Scriptures speak to all of life.

We must testify that we oppose adding the language as advocated in SB 1306 to the Human Relations Act. Employment as part of a religious enterprise includes religious criteria, for many religious citizens, this includes their view of marriage and human sexuality. Of all things, this Committee, and this legislature should not seek to promulgate a law that eliminates the ability for religious employers to hire employees who agree with the tenets of their faith, even their historic faith, and seek to live according to those tenets.

The ability of Christian schools and churches to employ persons who believe and live by the tenets of their faith is absolutely vital to the very existence of these organizations and the integrity of their mission.

For the state to enact SB 1306 endangers not only local churches and their integrated auxiliaries. It endangers religious educational institutions – seminaries, colleges, day schools, pre-schools, and day care institutions. It endangers a broad spectrum of what are nicknamed para-church organizations – separately incorporated religious organizations that support and give expression to their religious community, such as religious children's homes, retirement homes, social agencies, publishers, camps, and retreat centers. It endangers the small businesses operated by people of faith who use their lives, 24/7, to propagate their faith in their community.

We urge the Committee to preserve religious liberty by opposing SB 1306.

Respectfully submitted,

T. E. Clater

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Executive Director

