



Concerned Women for America
Legislative Action Committee

Religious Freedom Bills

Other bills have merit, but Georgians need the most broad-based religious protections this year, thus the heavy focus is on RFRA and FADA.

Regarding RFRA, Gov. Deal's message has been somewhat consistent – he will sign a bill if it gets to his desk. He has also consistently said that he wants a RFRA bill that mirrors the federal 1993 RFRA, yet he has also said he thought some anti-discrimination should be included. He vacillates on this point.

As recently as September 2, 2015, Gov. Deal said, "As long as we follow the federal model, which has not produced the kinds of catastrophic results that maybe both sides are predicting that legislation of that type would do, I think we stand a very good chance of getting a piece of legislation accomplished that will rightfully protect people from government in terms of their religious beliefs and at the same time not be disruptive to commerce."

Bill #	Title	Sponsors	Status
HB 757	Free Exercise Protection Act	Rep. Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville) Sen. Greg Kirk (R-Americus)	Bill passed out of House as Pastor Protection Act and was amended on the Senate floor to include SB 284 (First Amendment Defense Act). A compromise bill between the House and Senate resulted in the Free Exercise Protection Act. Final status: the Free Exercise Protection Act was vetoed by Gov. Nathan Deal.
HB 837 Support	Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) This bill is faithful to the federal RFRA, but does have a couple of state-specific provisions added.	Rep. Ed Setzler (R-Acworth)	Status: Assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. Final status: bill never received a hearing.
SB 284 Support	First Amendment Defense Action (FADA) The bill language, as introduced, tracks the federal FADA language that was introduced at the end of 2015.	Sen. Greg Kirk (R-Americus)	Final status: SB 284 was amended to HB 757

Bill #	Title	Sponsors	Status
SB 129 Support	Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) This bill is faithful to the federal RFRA, but does have a couple of state-specific provisions added.	Sen. Josh McKoon (R-Columbus)	Final status: bill died in House Judiciary Committee.
HB 218 Support	Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) This bill is faithful to the federal RFRA, but does have a couple of state-specific provisions added.	Rep. Sam Teasley (R-Marietta)	Final status: bill never received a hearing.
HB 756 Support	This legislation is designed to protect certain business entities from any requirement to provide goods or services for a wedding ceremony. The language, although good, still is not as comprehensive as SB 284, in its introduced version.	Rep. Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville)	Final status: bill never received a hearing.
HB 870 (similar to SB 309) Support	This bill prohibits public schools from becoming members of athletic associations that block interschool play with non-member schools, such as faith-based schools. It also protects student athletes' religious expression, including on their clothing.	Rep. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough)	Final status: passed the House, died in the Senate.
HB 816 Support	Georgia Student Religious Liberties Act of 2016 is an excellent bill that greatly clarifies and ensures the religious expression of students during the school day as well as during school sponsored activities.	Rep. Billy Mitchell (D-Stone Mountain)	Final status: bill never received a hearing.
SB 309 (similar to HB 870) Support	This bill prohibits public schools from becoming members of athletic associations that block interschool play with non-member schools, such as faith-based schools. It also protects student athletes' religious expression, including on their clothing.	Sen. Burt Jones (R-Jackson)	Passed House and Senate and awaits governor's signature.