

## Legislative history for SB 129 and HB 218

### Updated 4-8-15

The legislative session wrapped up on Thursday, April 2. Here is a short synopsis for SB 129:

- SB 129 passed the Senate. [Click here for Senate scorecard.](#)
- SB 129 passed out of a “special” subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, but was tabled in the full House Judiciary Committee after three Republicans voted with the Democrats to add an amendment that would have gutted the bill. [Click here for House subcommittee and full committee scorecard.](#)
- SB 129 is currently in the House Judiciary Committee and is active legislation for the 2016 legislative session.

### Updated 3-30-15

The hearing for SB 129, the “Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act,” which was scheduled for Monday, March 30 at 10:00 a.m., was abruptly cancelled late Sunday afternoon, March 29. On Monday, March 30, State Director Tanya Ditty joined a group of pastors, other grassroots activists, and attorneys at the state capitol to urge Gov. Nathan Deal to meet with us concerning the religious freedom legislation. We waited for over two hours, only to be told that neither Gov. Deal nor his staff had time to meet with the group.

It appears that Gov. Deal’s priorities do not include protecting religious freedom for Georgians. Please **call or e-mail his office TODAY and ask him to use his influence as governor to move SB 129 forward this session.** There are only two days left in the legislative session, so it is important you call or e-mail **today.**

Governor’s office: 404-656-1776

Online e-mail form: <http://gov.georgia.gov/webform/contact-governor-domestic-form>

Tanya Ditty  
State Director



Group of concerned pastors, grassroots activists and attorneys at the state capitol.

### Updated 3-29-15

#### Religious Freedom Hearing Abruptly Cancelled

The hearing for SB 129, the "Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act", which was scheduled for Monday, March 30 at 10:00 a.m., was abruptly cancelled late Sunday afternoon, March 29. The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* reported the cancellation. With only two days left in the session it is unclear if SB129 will get another hearing before the House Judiciary Committee.

Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." We are in a spiritual battle for the heart and soul of our state. Please beseech the Lord that He would move on our behalf and move SB 129 forward this session.

### Updated 3-27-15

#### Prayers and Calls Are Making a Difference!

If you have ever wondered if phone calls and e-mails have impact, I am here to tell you first-hand, "Oh yes they do!" After the tabling of SB 129, the "Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act", in the House Judiciary committee on March 26, we put out a clarion call to make phone calls once again to five different offices. The intensity of the calls into those five offices has resulted in SB 129 getting another hearing this Monday, March 30, at 10:00 a.m.

Please pray that SB 129 will be voted out of committee without any "poison pill" amendments. **PLEASE**, if at all possible plan to attend the hearing or get people to attend whom you know live close to the Capitol. Call them or e-mail them to be there. This will be the last chance in committee to get the job done this year. We need to have a strong presence. The hearing begins at 10:00 a.m. in room 132 of the State Capitol. Room 132 is small, so you might want to arrive by 9:15 a.m. to get a seat.

Thank you again for making a difference for religious liberty!

Tanya Ditty  
State Director

### Updated 3-26-15

SB 129, the "Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act" was tabled today in committee. Republican Rep. Mike Jacobs offered a "poison pill" amendment that would render the bill useless. Three Republicans voted with the Democrats to pass the amendment. Supporters of the bill felt it better to table the bill so there would be an opportunity to bring the bill back up for a vote before the end of the legislative session next week (April 2).

There are only three days left in the session, but CWA of Georgia will continue to fight for religious freedom protections. I need to ask you once again to make calls to the following five offices and respectfully urge them to support SB 129 with no amendments. Please call even if you have made previous calls. Calls need to be made immediately.

- Gov. Nathan Deal: 404-656-1776
- Speaker David Ralston: 404-656-5020/[david.ralston@house.ga.gov](mailto:david.ralston@house.ga.gov)
- Rep. Wendell Willard: 404-656-5125/[wendell.willard@house.ga.gov](mailto:wendell.willard@house.ga.gov)
- Rep. Jay Powell: 404-656-5103/[jay.powell@house.ga.gov](mailto:jay.powell@house.ga.gov)
- Rep. Beth Beskin: 404-656-0254/[beth.beskin@house.ga.gov](mailto:beth.beskin@house.ga.gov)
- Rep. Mike Jacobs: 404-656-5116/[mike.jacobs@house.ga.gov](mailto:mike.jacobs@house.ga.gov)

### Updated 3-25-15

SB 129 passed out of the “special subcommittee” in the House by a vote of 5-4 and now moves to the full Judiciary Committee for a hearing on Thursday, March 26. at 2:00 p.m.

Please contact the members of the [House Judiciary Committee](#) and urge them to support SB 129 with no amendments.

### Update 3-22-15

SB 129 passed out of the Senate and has been assigned to a “special subcommittee” in the House and will have a hearing only on Tuesday, March 24 at 2:00 p.m. in room 132 of the State Capitol. By all appearances, it looks like Speaker David Ralston and House Judiciary Chairman Wendell Willard are trying to run out the clock on the bill.

**Action:** Calls are needed immediately to the following:

- Speaker David Ralston – urge him to allow SB 129 to go to the House floor for a vote with no amendments. Phone: 404-656-5020/E-mail: [david.ralston@house.ga.gov](mailto:david.ralston@house.ga.gov)
- Your state representative – urge them to ask Speaker Ralston to allow the bill to have a vote on the House floor with no amendments. [Click here](#) to locate your state representative.

### Updated 3-5-15

The Georgia State Senate passed SB 129, the “Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act” by a vote of 37-15. We applaud the senators who voted in favor of protecting religious freedom for Georgia's citizens. [Click here](#) to view how your senator voted.

SB 129 now moves to the House where it will face a tough battle. Calls are needed immediately to the following:

- Speaker David Ralston - urge him to allow SB 129 to move forward. Phone: 404-656-5020 / E-mail: [david.ralston@house.ga.gov](mailto:david.ralston@house.ga.gov)
- Rep. Wendell Willard, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee – urge him to allow SB 129 to be scheduled for a hearing. Phone: 404-656-5125 / E-mail: [wendell.willard@house.ga.gov](mailto:wendell.willard@house.ga.gov)
- Members of the House Judiciary Committee - urge them to support the bill without amendment. [Click here](#) for committee list with phone numbers and email addresses.

### Update 3-2-15

The Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously passed SB 129, the “Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act.” CWA of Georgia thanks the following members of the committee who were present and voted yes.

- Sen. Joshua McKoon (Chairman)
- Sen. Charlie Bethel
- Sen. Bill Cowsert
- Sen. John F. Kennedy
- Sen. William Ligon
- Sen. Jesse Stone

The bill heads to the Senate Rules Committee. It must pass out of this committee before going to the full Senate for a vote.

[Open letter to Georgia State Senate](#) - SB 129 “Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act”

[Open letter to Georgia House of Representatives](#) - HB 218 "Preventing Government Overreach on Religious Expression Act"

### **Update 2-20-15**

On Thursday, February 19, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard SB 129, the "Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act". SB 129 is a straight forward bill that should easily have passed out of committee. However, three Republicans, led by Sen. Bill Cowser, locked arms with two Democrats and voted to table the bill. Sen. Cowser attempted to offer a "poison pill" amendment, and when his amendment did not get considered he voted in lockstep with the Democrats to table the bill.

The vote to table the religious freedom bill was politics at its worst, and we cannot allow the three Republican senators to get away with attempting to railroad religious freedom protections for Georgians. SB 129 is expected to be heard again in committee, and CWA of Georgia calls on the three Republican senators to vote in favor of SB 129 WITHOUT AMENDMENTS.

### **Action: Please contact the following people in this order:**

1. Lt. Governor Casey Cagle – urge the Lt. Governor to allow SB 129 to go forward WITHOUT AMENDMENTS. Phone: 404-656-5030 / [Online Contact/Email Form](#)

Contact the three Republican senators who voted against religious freedom protections, and urge them to vote in favor of SB 129 WITHOUT AMENDMENTS.

2. Sen. Bill Cowser (R-Athens) – E-mail: [Bill.Cowser@senate.ga.gov](mailto:Bill.Cowser@senate.ga.gov) ; Phone: (404) 463-1366; Fax: (404) 657-9887

3. Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro) – E-mail: [jesse.stone@senate.ga.gov](mailto:jesse.stone@senate.ga.gov) ; Phone: (404) 463-1314; Fax: (404) 463-1381

4. Sen. John F. Kennedy (R-Macon) – E-mail: [john.kennedy@senate.ga.gov](mailto:john.kennedy@senate.ga.gov); Phone: (404) 656-7454; Fax: (404) 651-5795

Sen. Josh McKoon filed the Senate version of the religious liberty bill titled, "Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act". The bill number is [SB 129](#).

### **House version of the bill**

Rep. Sam Teasley filed the House version of the religious liberty bill titled "Preventing Government Overreach on Religious Expression Act." The bill has a new number: [HB218](#).

### **Calls and e-mails are needed TODAY!**

1. Call or e-mail your state representative and urge them to **support** HB 218.
2. Call or e-mail Speaker David Ralston and urge him to put his **full support** behind HB 218 - Phone: 404- 656-5020 / [E-mail](#): [David.ralston@house.ga.gov](mailto:David.ralston@house.ga.gov).
3. Call or e-mail your state senator and and urge them to **support** religious liberty legislation when the senate bill is dropped.
4. Call or e-mail Lt. Governor Casey Cagle and urge him to put his **full support** behind religious liberty legislation. Phone: 404-656-5030 / [Online Contact/Email Form](#)
5. Call or e-mail Gov. Nathan Deal and urge him to put his **full support** behind religious liberty legislation. Phone: 404-656-1776 / [Online Contact/Email Form](#)