



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	Sponsor	Status
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)	Newly introduced in 2016. In House Judiciary.
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-Americanus)	Newly introduced in 2016, In Senate Judiciary.
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)	Passed Senate in 2015 in great form. Now in House Judiciary with bad anti-discrimination amendment that the committee added which guts the bill. It was tabled as a result.
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)	Introduced in 2016. In House Judiciary.
HB 756 Support	This legislation is designed to protect certain business entities from any requirement to provide goods or services for a	Rep. Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville)	Newly introduced in 2016, In House Judiciary.

Bill #	Title	Sponsor	Status
	wedding ceremony. The language, although good, still is not as comprehensive as SB 284, in its introduced version.		
HB 757 Not yet able to support until language is fixed.	Pastor Protection Act, as currently written, could create court interference within a church denomination itself. Although written to protect clergy from any requirement to participate in matrimonial ceremonies, the current language needs clarification and the language also should be expanded to include actual protections for religious entities, since the battle is often fought over the concept of "public accommodation."	Rep. Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville)	Newly introduced in 2016, In House Judiciary.
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)	Newly introduced in 2016, the legislation has been favorably reported out of the House Education Committee and awaits action in the Rules Committee.
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)	Newly introduced in 2016. In House Judiciary.
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)	Newly introduced in 2016. In Senate Education.