

## Hostility to Religious Liberty in the Texas House in 2015

**House Bill 3567 (Pastor Protection Bill)** – An act relating to the rights of certain religious organizations and individuals relating to a marriage that violates a sincerely held religious belief. **Outcome:** Sadly, Texas House leadership would *not* allow this bill to be voted on. Lt. Governor Patrick and the Texas Senate filed an **emergency** bill after the deadline. It languished in the House again until pastors put immense pressure to get it passed. Finally, House leadership reluctantly brought it to the floor for a vote where it passed easily. It was the **only** religious liberty bill which passed in 2015.

### Religious Liberty Bills that Died in the Texas House

**House Bill 3864 HOME Act** – It would have protected the rights of conscience and religious liberties for child welfare services providers (foster/adopt agencies). **Outcome:** It was left to die in Calendars Committee chaired by Todd Hunter in spite of a huge public outcry through emails, calls, and personal visits to bring it to the floor.

**House Bill 4105 (The Preservation of Sovereignty and Marriage Act)** -- It would have prevented state or local funds from being used to issue, enforce, or recognize a marriage other than a union between one man and one woman; prevents gov't employees from issuing, enforcing, or recognizing any other marriage. **Outcome:** Placed on the General State Calendar, but put low on the list towards the **last** day of session despite 89 State Reps sponsoring that bill.

**House Joint Resolution 125** – It would have supported a constitutional amendment relating to a person's free exercise of religion. **Outcome:** No hearing in either the House State Affairs Committee chaired by Byron Cook.

**House Bill 1556 (Interstate Commerce Improvement Act)** – Any anti-discrimination practice, standard, definition, or provision imposed on any business by a local government based on protected classes that are not currently protected in state law, prior to the effective date of the bill, would be null and void. Local gov'ts would have been barred from enforcing a policy that creates a protected classification or prohibits discrimination on a basis not contained in state law. **Outcome:** It was referred to the House Urban Affairs Committee, chaired by a Democrat. It had no chance.

**House Bill 3602** – It would have protected the religious freedom of a conscientious objector to act or fail to act with respect to certain issues of marriage, sexual relations, and gender. **Outcome:** No hearing in the House State Affairs Committee chaired by Byron Cook.

**House Bill 1747** – It would have prosecuted anyone for entry into a public restroom designated for the opposite sex as disorderly conduct. **Outcome:** No hearing in the House State Affairs Committee chaired by Byron Cook

**House Bill 2555** – It would have defined marriage in Texas and prohibited the creation or recognition of a marriage between persons of the same sex or civil union. **Outcome:** No hearing in the House State Affairs Committee chaired by Byron Cook.

**House Bill 138** – It would have protected the posting of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms. **Outcome:** No hearing in the House Public Education Committee chaired by Jimmie Don Aycock.

**House Bill 1355** – It would have ensured consequences for an elected officer who threatens, punishes, or intimidates a person based on the person's religious beliefs leading to the creation of a criminal offense. **Outcome:** No action taken in the House General Investigating & Ethics Committee after the hearing, chaired by John Kuempel.

**House Bill 1815** – It would have prohibited school district retaliation against a teacher for permissible teaching about the Bible. **Outcome:** No hearing in the House Public Education Committee chaired by Jimmie Don Aycock.

**House Bill 2553** – It would have protected a private business owner's right to choose whether to provide goods or services. **Outcome:** No hearing in the Business and Industry Committee chaired by Rene Oliveira who is a Democrat.

**House Resolution 30** – It would have supporting prayers, including the use of the word "God" at public gatherings, and displays of the Ten Commandments in public schools and other government buildings. **Outcome:** Had a hearing in the House State Affairs Committee chaired by Byron Cook, but he left it pending and would not move it out of committee.

**House Joint Resolution 65** – It proposed a constitutional amendment relating to the prohibition of government interference with certain speech by religious leaders and students. **Outcome:** No hearing in the House State Affairs Committee chaired by Byron Cook.