



ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL

News Release

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City Council Colleagues join Mary Norwood and Alex Wan in opposing discrimination

City Councilmembers introduce legislation opposing the religious liberty bills being considered by the Georgia General Assembly

ATLANTA – The Atlanta City Council unanimously approved a resolution by Councilmembers Mary Norwood and Alex Wan on Monday, March 7th expressing its opposition to the so-called religious liberty bills currently being debated in the Georgia General Assembly.

Norwood and Wan’s resolution was co-signed by Councilmembers Yolanda Adrean, Natalyn Archibong, Michael Julian Bond, Keisha Lance Bottoms, Andre Dickens, Kwanza Hall, Felicia Moore, Howard Shook, Carla Smith and Ivory Lee Young, Jr.

Also known as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (Senate Bill 129) and the Pastor Protection Act or First Amendment Defense Act (House Bill 757), the two pieces of legislation pending in the General Assembly would legalize discrimination against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

The proposed state law would allow both individuals and organizations to refuse to conduct business with or otherwise discriminate against anyone whose marriage they find counters their religious beliefs. It also protects individuals from existing nondiscrimination laws in Atlanta and elsewhere

A coalition of more than 400 companies is openly opposing the Georgia “religious liberty” bill that is rapidly heading toward passage, with at least one major company vowing to leave the state over the proposal. And on Wednesday, March 2, Georgia Unites Against Discrimination a

bipartisan grassroots campaign dedicated to protecting GLBT Georgians from discrimination delivered a petition with over 75,000 signatures opposing any efforts to enshrine discrimination in Georgia law to the Governor Nathan Deal, who recently came out against the proposal as well.

"I join Governor Nathan Deal, businesses all across Georgia, the LGBT Community and all Georgians who know that as Georgians we must stand for inclusion, equality, and fairness for all," Norwood said. "As a Citywide representative of our capital city, I understand how important it is to have a welcoming environment for everyone who lives, work in , play in or visits our capital city and other communities throughout our great state. Our recent successes in corporate relocations as well as our every expanding tourism businesses are predicated on knowing that Atlanta and all of Georgia welcomes them and embraces them."

"This is what sets Georgia and Atlanta apart and makes us a world-class environment, taking our place on the world stage. We cannot go backwards; we cannot afford to have discrimination in any form -- under any guise -- as the law of our State. Our future is too important," she said.

Observers say Georgia will suffer lost revenue, as in Indiana where public disdain for a similar bill, before it even became law, is said to have cost that state \$60 million. The Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the Atlanta Convention and Visitors' Bureau produced separate studies citing a potential loss of \$1 billion to \$2 billion if the bills pass without civil rights protections.

Norwood's resolution will be forwarded to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and all members of the Georgia General Assembly.

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