

Dear Governor Deal,

As recently as the fall of 2015, you were quoted in the press as supporting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) for passage here in Georgia. This is totally consistent with your past support of RFRA when you were a member of Congress, and I want to thank you for your past support of RFRA. However, we need your current support for RFRA as well as for the First Amendment Defense Act. Unfortunately, your recent comments in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* from March 3rd indicate that you are now siding with elite global businesses against the religious liberties of Georgia's taxpayers.

In the current debate on same-sex marriage, it is important that the State of Georgia ensure that the Free Exercise of Religion does not become a second-class right subsumed under the demands of same-sex marriage proponents. Around the nation, Christian businesses are targeted, harassed, and taken to court all due to the fact that they are exercising their freedom of choice on how to respond to the *Obergefell* orthodoxy on marriage. May I remind you that this is a new right, declared by five U.S. Supreme Court Justices, who have gone against the will of the people in this state to suddenly grant all the privileges of marriage to same-sex couples, creating a brand new human institution not contemplated in all of human history until now.

It is inconceivable to me that you do not recognize that many faithful Christians would consider it to be a sin for them to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding or to attend a same-sex wedding to take photographs. How you may prefer for people to deal with this new cultural challenge does not confer you the right, or government the right, to dictate that preference. People have freedom to choose how they serve their God. History is replete with disastrous results anytime government has attempted to coerce religious uniformity. America is supposed to be different, where religious liberty matters.

If our Georgia government allows business people to be harassed and taken to court simply because they peacefully refuse to do business for same-sex events, then Georgia fails in its constitutional duty to protect the Free Exercise of Religion. Furthermore, if government penalties come into play, then essentially government will take sides against religious citizens. If we allow government that kind of power to force uniformity regarding the sacred issue of marriage, then what can it not do? This is not the limited government that our Founders would have even envisioned.

Furthermore, it is not just businesses that are being targeted by LGBT activists around the nation. Adoption centers have closed because they cannot compromise their religious beliefs to place children with same-sex couples. Counselors are threatened with the removal of their licenses simply for refusing to counsel same-sex couples. While I am not too concerned about pastors right now, in some areas of the nation that have sexual orientation and gender identity laws, even they are harassed for not presiding over same-sex weddings.

Governor, though the world may be changing around us, Christians are called to be faithful to God's Word that does not change. In addition, since you are quite aware that things are changing, it is your

duty to allow the people of this state to respond and our elected representatives to reflect our will, not yours. You are the Chief Executive of Georgia, but the people are sovereign. We express our will through our legislators, and we expect you to respect our Constitution and our republican form of government so that our voice is heard.

Respectfully,