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## TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC" WHEN CITIZENS' RIGHTS ARE IN CONFLICT, ACCOMMODATION IS AN ANSWER!



By Stephen L. Bakke  April 12, 2016

### *Here's what provoked me:*

*A recent editorial was in conflict with my opinion, but I still thought it "advanced the ball" of useful debate in the issue of religious freedom. Often our rights and freedoms seem to be in conflict, so then what do you do? You must work them out in a win/win solution, not in a bitter and divisive manner as do some opinion writers and editorial cartoonists.*

### *Here's my response:*

#### **When Citizens' Rights Are in Conflict, Accommodation Is an Answer!**

The Editorial on April 12 ("States should not get broad license to discriminate," USA TODAY) presents interesting insight into dealing with the inevitable conflict between various aspects of human rights. In concluding, the editorial properly proclaims the value of "accommodation" when two principles such as religious liberty and gay and lesbian rights.

The editorial is, however, unfair in its accusation that states inappropriately take a "shotgun approach" in approaching these issues, rather than a "scalpel." I submit that in broadly refusing free exercise of religion in these matters, the federal government invites this type of reaction by the states.

Nevertheless, this editorial does effectively advance the debate on how to deal with conflicts between legitimate religious beliefs and other citizens' rights, unlike the Marlette editorial cartoon on April 5. Marlette clearly equates southern evangelicals' desire for reinforcement of religious rights with the ISIS terrorists' goals for violently spreading their beliefs.



Sadly, unlike the useful goal of advancing debate through clever, even controversial commentary, Marlette cartoons are often grossly inaccurate, divisive, and unhelpful in the effort to move opinions toward the right conclusion.