

 **TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"**
**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM,
INDIANA, BILL CLINTON,
CHUCK SCHUMER
- IT'S ALL MIXED UP!**

By Stephen L. Bakke  March 31, 2015



Here's what provoked me:

I believe the debate over Indiana's religious freedom legislation has failed to first understand the history behind such legislation and naively assumes that sincere convictions can be wiped away with the stroke of a pen or a narrow application of a regulation. NOT SO FAST!

Here's my response:

Religious Freedom, Indiana, Bill Clinton, Chuck Schumer – It's All Mixed Up!

"Boycott Indiana" is a reaction to Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) which is claimed to give citizens freedom to live their religious beliefs daily. Opponents claim it gives license to discriminate.

The original RFRA was Federal legislation introduced by democrat Congressman Chuck Schumer. It passed the House unanimously, and almost unanimously by the Senate. It was signed into law by President Clinton in 1993. Its intention was to prevent laws that substantially burden free exercise of religion. 19 states have similar laws in force, patterned after the Federal legislation.

In the interest of full disclosure, here's my stance – If I was:

- a baker, I would bake them a cake and wish them much happiness;
- a clergyman, I would follow the dictates of my church regarding same-sex marriage, but would enthusiastically bless the relationship;
- a doctor, I would say "Hell No!" to any attempt to compel me to perform an abortion.

The Indiana law is a "push-back" by conservatives. They believe failure to take a strong stance would threaten their traditional Constitutional rights.

I share their concern! Opponents to RFRA seek to require physicians to perform abortions (aka health care), would make it illegal to refuse to marry a same sex couple; and would bring charges against service providers refusing to accommodate a gay marriage ceremony.

We have a Constitutional right to exercise our religion freely. If transformational policies seek to push that freedom into the background, those attempting to do so should expect sincere but harsh push-back. That's what's happening in Indiana.