

June 15, 2015

The Honorable Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ander Crenshaw
House Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
B-300 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Chairman Crenshaw,

We, the undersigned, representing millions of Americans, urge you to include language on “must-pass” legislation that would prevent federal funds from being used to discriminate against those who affirm marriage as being between a man and a woman. Charities, non-profits, and small business owners with religious beliefs or moral convictions about marriage should not be penalized by the government for their beliefs. Appropriations bills, including the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill, have long included conscience protections for Americans with pro-life convictions. Preventing government discrimination for those who believe in natural marriage is equally important and increasingly necessary as evidenced by the Solicitor General’s comments during the Supreme Court oral arguments that the future tax-exempt status of religious schools is “going to be an issue.”

The *Marriage and Religious Freedom Act (MARFA)* as introduced in the 113th Congress would prevent the federal government from discriminating in programs, grants, contracts, licensing, and tax treatment against persons who believe that marriage is between a man and a woman. Such protections are urgently needed in light of new federal agency conditions requiring endorsement of same-sex relationships in order to compete for certain federal grants. In addition, the President’s problematic July 2014 Executive Order jeopardizing the ability of businesses and faith-based organizations that contract with the federal government to hire and administer programs according to their religious beliefs is deeply troubling. The government should not deem longstanding providers of important public services ineligible to compete for federal funding simply because of their beliefs about marriage. Attaching language similar to MARFA on “must-pass” legislation would stop these harmful and arbitrary government penalties.

We as individuals and organizations wish to remain active participants in and contributors to our communities. These protections ensure that we can continue to do so while also living in accordance with our beliefs about marriage and the family. Significantly, an overwhelming majority of Americans agree that we should have this freedom. Just last month, new polling from WPA Opinion Research and Family Research Council showed that 81% of Americans believe that individuals like us should be able to live and work in accordance with our belief in marriage as between a man and a woman.

While Americans in general continue to debate the meaning of marriage in the lead up to the Supreme Court's review of state marriage laws, one thing is clear: millions of Americans who continue to affirm the historic understanding of marriage should remain free from government discrimination.

Again, we urge your support for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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President
Family Research Council

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President, CEO, and General Counsel
Alliance Defending Freedom

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President
American Values

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