



RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A STATE-LEVEL FIRST AMENDMENT DEFENSE ACT

Submitted by: Art Williams, Messenger from First Baptist Church, Ellijay, Ga

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Georgia Baptist Convention passed a resolution defending traditional marriage; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Baptists embrace the biblical definition of marriage as the exclusive life-long union of one man and one woman, and that equating same-sex marriage with natural marriage creates a host of domestic and religious liberty issues; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* legalized same-sex marriage for the entire country; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Solicitor General admitted during oral arguments that the tax-exempt status of religious schools is “going to be an issue” if the Supreme Court finds a constitutional right to same-sex marriage in *Obergefell v Hodges*; and

WHEREAS, with the Supreme Court’s redefinition of marriage the respect for religious belief concerning the nature of marriage is no longer secure, and attacks against religious liberty and right of conscience have escalated since *Obergefell v Hodges*; and

WHEREAS, Kim Davis, a Kentucky court clerk became the first woman in United States history to be jailed for her religious beliefs regarding marriage after refusing to issue marriage licenses bearing her name as clerk to same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Supreme Court’s Board for Professional Conduct said a judge may not refuse to conduct a ceremony for same-sex couples, and that a judge may not refuse to do all marriages based on personal religious beliefs about marriage that do not allow him or her to celebrate same-sex marriages; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico State Supreme Court ruled that a husband and wife who own and operate a photography studio must act against their religious beliefs and take photographs of a same-sex commitment ceremony, if they want to do business in the state. One of the judges wrote that violating one’s religious beliefs was “the price of citizenship;” and

WHEREAS, in a disturbing trend, faith-based charities have been forced out of adoption and foster care services because of their religious beliefs that children belong with both a mother and father; and

WHEREAS, a federal First Amendment Defense Act (FADA) has been introduced in Congress that would prohibit any federal agency from denying tax exemption, grants, contracts, licenses, or certifications to an individual, association, or business based on the belief that marriage is the union between one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, a federal First Amendment Defense Act would only affect the federal government, so without a state-level FADA state and local governments could discriminate in their dealings with individuals, organizations and businesses that adhere to the religious viewpoint that marriage is the union between one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, the State of Georgia and local municipalities must not be allowed to discriminate against people who believe what 76 percent of Georgians said about marriage in 2004 —that it’s the union of one man and one woman;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we must defend religious liberty and the right of conscience by curtailing the misuse and abuse of government power for religious persecution; and



Georgia Baptist Mission Board

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Georgia Baptists urge the state legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign both the 1993 version of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and a state-level First Amendment Defense Act; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia's Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.