



Kansas House passes bill allowing refusal of service to same-sex couples

By **Ben Brumfield** and **Dana Ford**, CNN
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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Gay and lesbian couples in Kansas may be refused service more often

A bill protects individuals, groups and organizations that turn them away for religious reasons

It "seeks to enshrine discrimination," rights group leader says

If one employee refuses to serve, the employer must ask others to

(CNN) -- Denying services to same-sex couples may soon become legal in Kansas.

House Bill 2453 explicitly protects religious individuals, groups and businesses that refuse services to same-sex couples, particularly those looking to tie the knot.

It passed the state's Republican-dominated House on Wednesday with a vote of 72-49, and has gone to the Senate for a vote.

Such a law may seem unnecessary in a state where same-sex marriage is banned, but some Kansas lawmakers think different.

They want to prevent religious individuals and organizations from getting sued, or otherwise punished, for not providing goods or services to gay couples -- or for not recognizing their marriages or committed relationship as valid.

This includes employees of the state.

The politics

The law claims to protect the rights of religious people, but gender rights advocates such as Equality Kansas are dismayed.

"Kansans across the state are rightly appalled that legislators are spending their efforts to pass yet another piece of legislation that seeks to enshrine discrimination against gay and lesbian people into law," state chairwoman Sandra Meade said.

"HB 2453 is a blatant attempt to maintain second-class citizen status for taxpaying gay and lesbian Kansans."

Despite the blowback, its chances of passing seem pretty good.



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Republicans dominate the state's Senate and Gov. Sam Brownback is a conservative Christian known for taking a public stand against same-sex marriage.

Brownback has already praised the bill in an interview with a local newspaper.

"Americans have constitutional rights, among them the right to exercise their religious beliefs and the right for every human life to be treated with respect and dignity," he told [The Topeka Capital-Journal](#).

The details

HB 2453 is titled "An act concerning religious freedoms with respect to marriage" and covers many bases.

It reads, in part: "No individual or religious entity shall be required by any governmental entity to do any of the following, if it would be contrary to the sincerely held religious beliefs of the individual or religious entity regarding sex or gender:

"Provide any services, accommodations, advantages, facilities, goods, or privileges; provide counseling, adoption, foster care and other social services; or provide employment or employment benefits, related to, or related to the celebration of, any marriage, domestic partnership, civil union or similar arrangement."

Anyone who turns away a gay couple not only can't face a civil suit, but if anyone tries to sue, they could get nailed with the other side's legal fees.

There are some small concession in the bill to gay couples.

If an employee at a nonreligious or government business refuses to serve a gay or lesbian couple for religious reasons, the manager is obligated to find another employee who will oblige.

It also explicitly says that the law does not authorize discrimination against anyone, including clergy, who performs or supports same-sex unions.

The trend

The Kansas bill would seem to buck the trend.

Laws approving same-sex marriage have recently passed in many parts of the United States, bringing the total number of states where it is legal to 17. Add to that the District of Columbia.

Worldwide, 16 other countries (and parts of Mexico) also have laws allowing same-sex marriage and domestic partnerships. Most of the nations are in Europe and South America.

CNN's Sonya Hamasaki contributed to this report.

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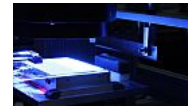
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BostonBC · 17 minutes ago

Can't wait for the video of Brownback to be released smoking crack while he's servicing two men at the same time.

10 ^ | 2 ▾ · Reply · Share ›



laboxter407 → **BostonBC** · 7 minutes ago

Is this some sort of fantasy in gay circles?

3 ^ | 3 ▾ · Reply · Share ›



BostonBC → **laboxter407** · 2 minutes ago

No but it seems to be a recurring theme in those holier than thou circles who try and impose their morals on people.

3 ^ | 1 ▾ · Reply · Share ›



Tyler Warner · 4 minutes ago

I will email my state's congress and ask that we ban anyone with a Kansas ID or license plate from receiving services in businesses here; after all according to the Kansastards we have a right as a state to object to them and not want them to come here and intermix with our good secular state.

And the retarded Kansas folks always pour in like flies on a corpse every winter to ski here, even though we have legal gay marriage and the least religious state.

4 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›



Andrzej Andy Siata · 27 minutes ago

if I'm an restaurant owner or a bar owner. no gays allowed. i would tell my employees to respect my policy or get fired for it. everyone has their rights but marriage is between a man and a woman

18 ^ | 8 ▾ · Reply · Share ›



WestCoastStar → **Andrzej Andy Siata** · 17 minutes ago

That's why you're not a bar owner.

12 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›



BostonBC → **WestCoastStar** · 15 minutes ago

I expect he has lots of experience closing down bars and not getting any women.

5 ^ | 1 ▾ · Reply · Share ›



Apatheist → **Andrzej Andy Siata** · 20 minutes ago

So you are an @\$hole. That's what you're trying to say?

10 ^ | 6 ▾ · Reply · Share ›



Ohno → **Apatheist** · 19 minutes ago

No, he does not want to put his customers at risk of getting sick, and exposing their children to this sick behavior.

8 ^ | 5 ▾ · Reply · Share ›



jacksays → **Ohno** · 15 minutes ago

Leaving sick? how many fell would they last sick? (sitting on



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