



**BOBBY JINDAL**  
GOVERNOR

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**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

April 16, 2015

Mr. James M. Driesse  
Senior State Executive, IBM  
5353 Essen Lane  
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Dear Mr. Driesse,

I received your letter regarding IBM's concerns about H.B. 707, the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act, and my support for the bill. I appreciate the letter, but fear that you are confused about what the bill would accomplish in practice, and I hope I can clear up some misconceptions. I believe after understanding what the bill actually does, your fear over the bill will be alleviated.

The Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act will absolutely not "protect discrimination" or legalize discrimination in any way. All the bill seeks to do is ensure the STATE cannot discriminate against an individual or entity on the basis of that persons sincerely held religious view about traditional marriage. H.B. 707 simply seeks to ensure the state does not take adverse action against a person because of a religious belief in traditional marriage. The bill absolutely does not provide a right for an individual or business owner to discriminate against gays or lesbians. It does not give businesses or individuals the right to refuse service to gays or lesbians.

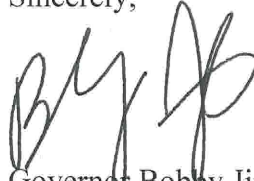
The Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act is not similar to the bills that were debated in Indiana and Arkansas in recent weeks, as our proposed bill is not a Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). Louisiana actually already has a RFRA law, it passed with bipartisan support and minimal debate in 2010. Nineteen other states have similar RFRA laws as Louisiana's. These laws caused little debate and public outcry before last month. I am certain that IBM currently conducts business in many if not all of these other states that have RFRA laws on the books. I would be surprised to hear that these laws have created a "hostile work environment" for your employees.

In Louisiana, we do not support discrimination, and we do support religious liberty, and we believe that we can uphold both of those values simultaneously. Our country was founded on the principle of religious liberty. We support the Bill of Rights and simply don't believe the government should ever force someone to participate in a marriage ceremony against his or her will. People, charities and small businesses should not be penalized because they believe in the traditional definition of marriage. Regardless of anyone's beliefs about the definition of marriage, we should all respect the right of our neighbors to hold a different view. I am sure IBM agrees with these basic principles.

I hope you and your colleagues will cut through the smears and misconceptions being spread about this bill and learn about what it actually seeks to accomplish. In the United States, a state should not be able to take adverse action against an individual for holding a sincerely held religious view regarding marriage. That would be true discrimination.

I thank you again for choosing Louisiana as a place to expand and thrive. I hope you reconsider your position on H.B. 707.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bobby Jindal', written in a cursive style.

Governor Bobby Jindal  
State of Louisiana

cc: The Honorable John Alario, Jr.  
President, Louisiana State Senate  
State Capitol Building  
P.O. Box 94183  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

The Honorable Charles Kleckley  
Speaker, Louisiana House of Representatives  
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