



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE

ACTION ALERT

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR A HUMAN LIFE AMENDMENT, INC.
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW • Suite 24 • Washington, DC 20005

202.393.0703
FAX: 202.347.1383
NCHLA.ORG

Religious Liberty Under Attack in the Nation's Capital

Congress Should Stop DC Council's "Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act" (RHNDA) and "Human Rights Amendment Act" (HRAA). Our help is needed to stop two dangerous pieces of legislation recently passed by the Council of the District of Columbia and signed by the mayor. These acts, RHNDA and HRAA, are subject to disapproval by Congress. On March 6, 2015 the DC government forwarded these laws to Congress, which has 30 legislative days to pass resolutions of disapproval; after this time other avenues might be able to block the laws' implementation.

These laws "violate the freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of association protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution, as well as by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and other federal laws," according to letters sent to House and Senate on March 20 by the Archbishop of Washington along with the chairmen of five committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Congress should be urged to block these laws.*

Recommended Actions:

- Send e-mails through NCHLA's Action Center at: nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=316
- Contact your Representative and Senators by phone. Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call their local offices. Full contact info can be found on Members' web sites at: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

Suggested Message: "Please act to rescind the District of Columbia's Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act (RHNDA) and Human Rights Amendment Act, (HRAA). Congress should stop these acts of government coercion which undermine our cherished freedoms, especially in our Nation's Capital."

When: Please act immediately and continue until notified. Congress may act on resolutions of disapproval as early as the week of March 23.

Background

The US Constitution gives Congress ultimate control over the laws of the District of Columbia; once Congress receives a law from the DC government it has 30 legislative days to pass a resolution of disapproval, and may take other steps after that time.

RHNDA and HRAA were sent to Congress on March 6. RHNDA forbids all employers to "discriminate" in hiring, firing, promotion and job benefits because an employee or his or her family member is making "reproductive health decisions" on matters such as sterilization and abortion. Even religious organizations could be forced to hire and retain pro-life spokespersons directly involved in choosing elective abortions for themselves or others. Employers may also be told they must provide elective abortion coverage for all employees. HRAA rescinds a longstanding law (the Armstrong amendment) that has allowed religious educational institutions to decline support for activities and groups hostile to their teachings on sexuality. Both laws pose an unprecedented threat to religious liberty and other First Amendment rights.

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Rep. James Lankford (R-OK) have introduced joint resolutions of disapproval for RHNDA (S.J.Res. 10) and HRAA (S.J. Res. 11). Congress must act on these resolutions soon to stop these bills. If the resolutions do not pass, other action such as amendments to the annual funding bill for the District of Columbia should be considered. Messages urging Congress to act should begin now and continue until this alert is withdrawn. For the text of the US bishops' letter see: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/ADW-USCCB-letter-DC-bills-3-20-15.pdf>

3/20/15