

# STATE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACTS



## BILL OVERVIEW

Modeled on the Federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA)

Government must have a “compelling interest,” or strong reason, before it interferes with someone’s freedom of religion.

21 states have RFRA’s and 13 other states have similar protections by state courts.

## TRUE & FALSE



“ HB 218 will protect religious minorities.

TRUE

Jewish people believe that the body should not be disturbed after death. In Georgia, rabbis all too often have to face undue bureaucracy when dealing with the state’s automatic, routine autopsies. ***This bill would protect their right to practice their faith in accordance to their conscience.***



“ The bill will allow people to abuse children and get away with it.

FALSE

Religious Freedom Restoration Acts, ***including this bill***, do not allow anyone to abuse children or commit any other criminal act. ***Religious freedom never trumps public safety or justifies inherently evil acts.***



“ RFRA will protect people of faith from unnecessary and costly red tape.

TRUE

A Baptist Mississippi pastor sought to build a new church, but he ***was denied permission because of discrimination against religion***. A RFRA bill would have helped this pastor build his church without wasting precious time and money fighting the bureaucracy.



“ All Americans have the God-given right to live their faith according to their conscience.

TRUE

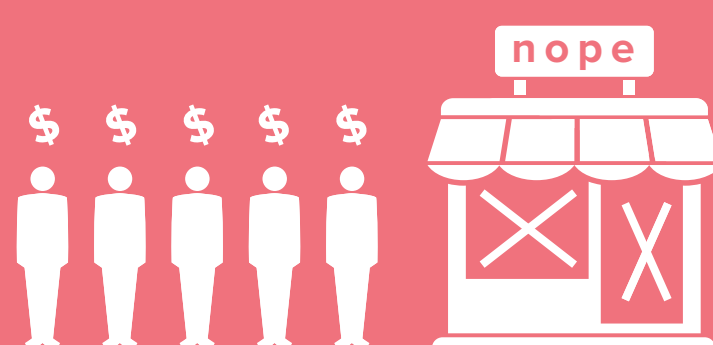
Freedom of conscience means that ***all Americans can follow the religious faith of their choice, or none at all if they so choose.***



“ The bill will encourage domestic violence.

FALSE

Preventing crime and violence, ***including domestic violence*** is clearly a compelling government interest and would trump any religious claim. In the 20+ years RFRA has existed, ***never has a RFRA case successfully cleared a defendant of a violent criminal act.***



“ The bill lets a restaurant owner deny service to an LGBT person.

FALSE

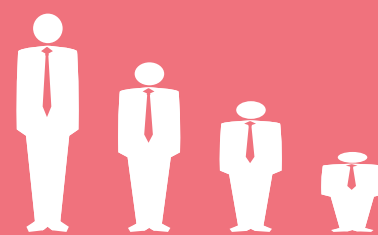
The bill ***does nothing to encourage or discourage discrimination***. RFRA states average \$1.3 trillion<sup>1</sup> in annual retail transactions. Despite this huge volume, ***never has a hotel, restaurant or major retailer used this law to deny service to an LGBT person.***



“ RFRA balances the rights of the individual with the interests of the government.

TRUE

The claim of religious liberty doesn’t guarantee victory; it just makes sure that government recognizes the impact of its rules and regulations on religious expression.



“ The bill will crush job creation.

FALSE

In comparing states with and without RFRA’s, there is ***nothing to indicate*** RFRA has any effect—positive or negative—on job creation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>2007 Economic Census, North American Industry Classification System <sup>1</sup> <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2014/12/22/which-states-created-the-most-jobs-in-2014>