

August 22, 2016

To: Chairwoman Lisa Baker, Chairwoman Christine Tartaglione, and the other Members of the Pennsylvania Senate Labor and Industry Committee

From: Rev. Daniel Henwood, Pastor Nicholas Schweinsburg, and Mr. Michael Boole

We are the leadership team of Canaan Bible Chapel, an independent Bible church, of about 250 people, in South Canaan Township, Wayne County. We have a diverse ministry, serving this portion of Wayne County through Sunday School classes, community outreach projects, week-long day camps, children and teen programs, counseling ministries, etc. Our largest ministry is Canaan Christian Academy, a K4-12 school, that serves families from across a wide section of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Entering our 39th year of educating young people, we have an average enrollment of 180 students. It is because of our love and concern for the people we serve that we are writing to you, today, regarding SB1306.

When we consider the potential implications that this bill has for our ministry, and others like it across the Commonwealth, we have no other choice but to oppose SB1306.

- (1) When parents enroll their children in our school, they do so fully understanding that we approach education from a certain foundation, rooted in the Bible. In addition, we exist to provide employees a workplace rooted in biblical truth and to help each other in our spiritual lives. Our entire staff, from the pastors to the custodians, are involved in that religious mission and process, whether through formal classroom instruction or informal conversation between employees, from employees to outsiders, or employees to students or church attendees. To be sure that we are all moving in a unified direction, it is very important that we be able to hire all of our employees, no matter their job description, on the basis of shared religious beliefs. This bill could be used to compel us to consider those, for employment, who don't share our same foundation.
- (2) Our foundation is more than just a philosophy of belief. It also governs the way that we live. In fact, some of our most powerful teaching, whether in the school or in the church, is done by displaying that philosophy, in everyday living. Those in our care, in addition to co-employees and outsiders, need to see consistency in those that work for us, in and out of the classroom, and both during and after work hours. Yet, once again, this legislation under consideration could be used to force ministries, like ours, to hire individuals who do not believe what we believe or whose manner of living is inconsistent with the underlying church teaching when it comes to marriage and God's design for sexual activity.

- (3) One other element, of great concern to our overall ministry, is the issue of privacy for our ministry employees, because the legislation would require us to treat employees that identify themselves as a gender different than their biological sex, as if they were the opposite sex. Though we have great compassion for those who are struggling with questions of their own identity, we are very concerned about the violation of personal privacy that occurs should we be forced to permit people to use private places designated for the opposite sex. Whether a person has good or bad motives, the privacy violations experienced by other employees remains the same. In addition to the violation of privacy that would occur, there is greater risk of potential abuse and physical harm to all members of our staff since it makes it easier for persons to abuse this law in order to gain access to a victim.

As you can tell, from our statements above, we have some very serious concerns about the implications of this proposed legislation, on both religious liberty and privacy grounds. So, we would ask you to oppose SB1306. We would be happy to discuss this matter with you further, personally, if you would so desire.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rev. Daniel Henwood
Senior Pastor, Canaan Bible Chapel



Pastor Nicholas Schweinsburg
Assistant Pastor, Canaan Bible Chapel



Mr. Michael Boole
Principal, Canaan Christian Academy