

By: Representatives Lamar, Ladner

To: Judiciary A

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 737

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, CLERGY,
2 MINISTERS AND CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO
3 OFFICIATE ANY MARRIAGE OR PROVIDE SERVICES IF THAT ACTION WOULD
4 CAUSE THE ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUAL TO VIOLATE A SINCERELY HELD
5 RELIGIOUS BELIEF; TO PROVIDE THAT THE REFUSAL TO SOLEMNIZE ANY
6 MARRIAGE OR PROVIDE SERVICES BASED ON A RELIGIOUS BELIEF IS NOT
7 THE BASIS FOR A CIVIL OR CRIMINAL CAUSE OF ACTION AND PROTECTED
8 ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS SHALL NOT BE PENALIZED OR HAVE
9 BENEFITS WITHHELD FOR REFUSING SUCH SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED
10 PURPOSES.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

12 **SECTION 1.** (1) A religious organization, an organization
13 supervised or controlled by or in connection with a religious
14 organization, an individual employed by a religious organization
15 while acting in the scope of that employment or a clergy member,
16 Rabbi, minister or other spiritual leader shall not be required to
17 solemnize any marriage or provide services, accommodations,
18 facilities, goods or privileges for a purpose related to the
19 solemnization, formation or celebration of any marriage if such
20 action would cause the organization or individual to violate a
21 sincerely held religious belief.



22 (2) A refusal to provide services, accommodations,
23 facilities, goods or privileges under subsection (1) of this
24 section is not the basis for a civil or criminal cause of action
25 or any other action by this state or a political subdivision of
26 this state to penalize or withhold any benefits or privileges,
27 including tax exemptions or governmental contracts, grants or
28 licenses, from any organization or individual protected in
29 subsection (1) of this section.

30 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
31 and after its passage.

