



## No on HB426: Codifying Discrimination

### HB426 Religious Freedom

The ACLU is an ardent defender of religious freedom. We strongly support that all individuals have the absolute right to believe whatever they want about God, faith, and religion. But when someone voluntarily enters into a profession, they cannot use those beliefs to threaten the rights, welfare, and well-being of others.

- **HB426 endangers Idahoans from getting the care and services they deserve.** The public expects a certain level of professionalism and consistency when interacting with licensed professionals, including therapists, lawyers, and medical personnel. **This bill would allow service providers to use religion to discriminate and deny necessary services. For example:**
  - Doctors or nurses working at a clinic could even refuse to perform life-saving treatment if it violates their religious beliefs.
  - Because the law protects licensed service providers from being sanctioned by the governing board of their profession, they would be able to continue practicing regardless of the harm of their actions.
- **HB426 undermines professional ethics and responsibilities.** A state license signals to the public that a professional will uphold their professional and ethical standards. **But under this bill, so long as the licensed professionals are acting according to their sincerely held religious beliefs, their license cannot be denied, revoked, or suspended.**
  - This could create serious consequences to public health and safety because licensing boards would not be able to reprimand professionals who cause harm to their patients or clients.
  - Because licensing boards would not be able to discipline professionals and exercise their judgment, the public will not be able to trust they will receive the care they need and deserve.

Ultimately, HB426 seeks to authorize licensed individuals to use their religion as a tool for discrimination in their professional work environment. The public expects to be treated fairly by licensed individuals, and should not have to fear whether their doctor, therapist, or teacher is providing them with safe and consistent care. By undermining the discretion of licensing boards in Idaho, the level of professional care being offered to community members will be severely hindered and will reduce the significance of professional codes of ethics and behaviors for various licensed professions. While religious liberty is a fundamental freedom, it should not be wielded as a weapon to threaten the rights, welfare, and well-being of others.

For these reasons, we strongly urge a 'No' vote on HB426.