



Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017 • PHONE: 202-541-3000

June 18, 2015

Representative Raúl Labrador
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Labrador,

As the respective chairmen of the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage and the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, we write in strong support of your bill, H.R. 2802, the First Amendment Defense Act (FADA). As you know, persons who believe marriage is the union of one man and one woman are increasingly having their religious liberties jeopardized and even forfeited.

Recently, two ministers – a husband and a wife – operating a wedding chapel were threatened with criminal prosecution if they did not officiate at same-sex “weddings.” There have also been efforts to remove the tax-exempt status of some organizations – including religious organizations – unless they violate their faith beliefs and moral convictions regarding human sexuality. A Christian college in Massachusetts was given a year by its accreditor to report on how its non-discrimination policies met the accreditor's standards for accreditation. Additionally, family business owners are being told that they cannot operate a business without violating their faith beliefs and moral convictions about marriage. It is becoming apparent that some who promote marriage redefinition do not support the coexistence and tolerance of different ideas in a pluralistic society but instead have a “comply or else” agenda.

FADA would provide significant protection for religious liberty at the federal level and would be an important measure in extending conscience protection to individuals and organizations who believe marriage is the union of one man and one woman. As a non-discrimination Act, FADA would protect these individuals and organizations from federal government discrimination. In a climate of increasing intolerance, these protections are very much needed.

The teaching of the Catholic Church about marriage is based on both faith and reason. Using right reason, one can know that given the nature of the human person, created as male and female, marriage is the union of one man and one woman. The leadership of our Church will continue to promote and protect the natural truth of marriage as foundational to the common good.

We are pleased to support the First Amendment Defense Act, and we urge your colleagues to join H.R. 2802 as cosponsors. Thank you for introducing in the House this needed bill.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco
Subcommittee for the Promotion
and Defense of Marriage

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore
Ad Hoc Committee for Religious
Liberty