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Contact:

Drew Konow

konow@religiousinstitute.org

Nearly 1,000 Clergy and 2,500 People of Faith Respond to New State Anti-LGBTQ Legislation

Statement urges lawmakers to overturn anti-LGBTQ legislation and commit to creating loving, just communities that embody justice for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

In the past week, North Carolina and Mississippi have passed the most sweeping anti-LGBTQ laws to date. Despite the rapid corporate and public rejection of the North Carolina law, on April 5th, Governor Phil Bryant of Mississippi signed HB 1523 into law. The law allows physicians and other medical professionals to deny services to LGBTQ people, allows employers and school officials to prevent transgender people from using the restroom with which they identify, and protects the belief that "sexual relations are properly reserved" to a marriage between a man and a woman.

Responding to the passage of the North Carolina and Mississippi laws and to anti-LGBTQ legislation being considered throughout the country, a broad faith coalition released a statement today urging public officials to "reject anti-LGBTQ and, specifically, anti-transgender legislation and to commit to creating loving, just communities that embody justice for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations."

Signed by nearly 1,000 faith leaders and more than 2,500 people of faith, the statement acknowledges that of the record 175+ anti-LGBTQ bills filed in 2016, 45 of those bills directly target transgender people. The statement notes that many of these anti-LGBTQ efforts are perpetrated in the name of religion and calls people of faith to action: "The voices of people of faith and religious leaders are needed to respond to any attempt to target transgender people and to restrict justice, dignity, and equality for all LGBTQ people."

The Religious Institute organized the statement in partnership with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer clergy, activists, and people of faith. The Religious Institute, in coordination with local organizations, will deliver this statement to the governors and state legislatures in every state where anti-LGBTQ or anti-transgender legislation is considered, beginning with Georgia, North Carolina, and Mississippi.

Endorsers include the heads of five religious denominations, top denominational officials, leaders of national faith organizations, presidents of seminaries, theologians, and activists working at the intersection of religion and LGBTQ justice.

Among the signers are Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer (United Church of Christ), Rabbi Denise Eger (Central Conference of American Rabbis), Bishop Yvette Flunder (The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries), Rev. Peter Morales (Unitarian Universalist Association), Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson (Metropolitan Community Churches), Alex Patchin McNeill (More Light Presbyterians), Rev. Dr. Debra Haffner (Religious Institute), Rev. Barry Lynn (Americans United for the Separation of

Church and State), Nancy K. Kaufman (National Council of Jewish Women), Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner (Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism), Cedric Harmon (Many Voices), Chett Pritchett (Methodist Federation for Social Action), Rev. Rodney McKenzie, Jr. (National LGBTQ Task Force), Dr. Justin Tanis (Center for LGBTQ Studies in Religion), Mary E. Hunt (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual), Rev. Cameron Patridge, (Episcopal priest and theologian), Rev. Gwen Fry (Integrity USA), Dr. Sharon Groves (Auburn Seminary), Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt (Starr King School for the Ministry), and Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes (Vanderbilt Divinity School).

[To view the complete statement click here.](#)

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The Religious Institute (www.religiousinstitute.org), based in Westport, CT, is a nonprofit, multifaith organization dedicated to advocating for sexual health, education and justice in faith communities and society. More than 8,500 clergy, seminary presidents and deans, religious scholars and other religious leaders representing more than 50 faith traditions are part of the Religious Institute's national religious leaders network.