



KEEP KIDS
First

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Children in foster care need more opportunities to find forever homes, not fewer. But state and local governments are taking actions that strip away those opportunities for kids. They are demanding that faith-based child welfare providers—who are often among the most effective at recruiting and training families to foster or adopt children in need—forfeit their religious convictions in order to continue helping children find homes.

When the government discriminates against faith-based providers, children have fewer providers working to find them a home.

- ▶ In 2006, Catholic Charities of Boston, one of the nation's oldest adoption providers, was forced to shut down its adoptive services after the state demanded that Catholic Charities abandon its convictions that children deserve to be raised in a home with a father and mother.
- ▶ That same year, San Francisco made similar demands of adoption and foster care providers within the city, leading to a local faith-based provider being forced out of providing adoption services to children in need.
- ▶ In 2010, Washington, D.C. cancelled its long-standing contract with the local Catholic Charities for adoption and foster care services after the District changed its laws to recognize same-sex marriages. Despite an 80-year history of serving children and families, the District deemed Catholic Charities unfit to continue to serve because of its belief that a child deserves a chance to have a mom and dad.
- ▶ In 2011, the lives of over 2,000 kids in foster care were disrupted after Illinois passed new legislation that prohibited faith-based providers from operating consistent with their religious beliefs regarding marriage and family.

By protecting faith-based providers, we can ensure that more providers recruit and train more families to provide forever homes for kids.

- ▶ In 2018, Philadelphia announced that it would cease contracting with or providing referrals to two faith-based providers unless those providers compromised their religious convictions regarding marriage and began placing children with same-sex couples.
- ▶ In August 2018, Catholic Charities of Buffalo, which had served the community for over 90 years, was required to discontinue foster care and adoption services as a result of New York regulations that would force it to perform its work in a manner that violated its religious beliefs.
- ▶ National groups like the Human Rights Campaign and the ACLU are actively pushing more states and municipalities to pass laws that force faith-based providers to violate their convictions if they want to continue to serve children and families needing adoption and foster care services. In fact, when Michigan passed a law protecting providers, the ACLU filed a lawsuit challenging it.

When the government discriminates against faith-based providers, children have fewer providers working to find them a home. Thousands of children have been thrown into turmoil and confusion when government officials seek to remove faith-based providers from serving children, birth moms, and families.

But by ensuring all providers—including faith-based providers—remain free to serve, we can ensure that more groups are recruiting and training more families to provide forever homes to the 400,000 kids in America needing them. Protecting a diversity of providers and their ability to operate according to their values—and with families who share those values—serves the most vulnerable in our midst.

