

CALIFORNIA BILL THREATENS RELIGIOUS COLLEGES



Bill Donohue comments on a bill that would undermine religious colleges in California:

The California State Assembly is considering a bill that would gut the religious identity of faith-based colleges and universities in the state.

SB 1146, which has already been passed by the state Senate, is sponsored by Sen. Ricardo Lara, one of seven members of the legislature's LGBT caucus. It's ostensible purpose is to protect LGBT students against discrimination. In reality, however, it is a heavy-handed exercise in anti-religious discrimination.

The bill would severely constrict religious exemptions from federal Title IX regulations. Previously applicable to all students in religious colleges, these exemptions would now be restricted to only those educational programs in such colleges that prepare students for clerical ministry or other religious vocations, or for teaching theological subjects pertaining to religion.

For all other students, religious colleges and universities in California would no longer be able to require theology or religious studies classes, attendance at worship services, or corporate prayer in convocations or classes. The schools' ability to include religious ideas in regular course work could be threatened. And of course, maintaining separate male and female bathrooms and dormitories would be prohibited.

"SB 1146 is a direct and blatant attack on the religious freedom of Catholic and Christian citizens of California advanced by the state's LGBT legislative lobby," said Dr. Derry Connolly, president of John Paul the Great Catholic College in Escondido, California. "It severely impacts citizens' constitutionally protected right to freedom of religion."

This bill should be defeated, and religious freedom upheld in California for all faith-based institutions of higher learning.