

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AGAIN UNDER ATTACK IN CALIF.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest assault on religious freedom in California:

California State Assembly lawmakers are at it again.

No legislative session is complete, it seems, without some radical lawmakers launching an attack on the First Amendment rights of religious institutions and people of faith.

This year's version, AB 2943– the Consumer Legal Remedies Act–was passed by the Assembly April 19, and now goes to the Senate. The bill ostensibly targets “conversion therapy” in treating those with same-sex attraction. But it is written so broadly, notes the California Catholic Conference, that it “leaves even simple religious speech on same-sex attraction or activities open to legal action and impinges on the basic human right of freedom of religion.”

It could be used against licensed counselors treating consenting adults, as well as clergy and religious organizations that teach that homosexuality is wrong, and that marriage is between one woman and one man. It could even be used, as some constitutional attorneys have pointed out, to target bookstores that sell publications challenging gender identity ideology.

Lest anyone doubt the anti-religious nature of this bill, consider the history of its sponsor, Assembly member Evan Low. Chair of the legislature's LGBT Caucus, in 2016 he sponsored a bill to deny state funds for colleges that do not comply with state policies regarding LGBT students. With utter contempt for religious freedom, he called schools that seek a religious exemption from these policies “the worst of the worst in terms of institutions that discriminate.”

Now he is advancing a bill that the Pacific Justice Institute calls “a diabolical attempt to stifle real debate and limit personal choices.”

We stand with the California Catholic Conference, and with all true friends of religious liberty, in urging its defeat.