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WISCONSIN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION VOTES TO THREATEN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
Wisconsin representatives vote 6-2 in favor of flawed Employment Non-Discrimination Act

MADISON —Yesterday Wisconsin Republican Congressman Paul Ryan (2nd CD) joined all five Wisconsin Congressional Democrats in voting in favor of the “Employment Non-Discrimination Act” (H.R. 3685) or ENDA. Republicans James Sensenbrenner (5th CD) and Tom Petri (6th CD) were the only members of the Wisconsin delegation voting against the bill that passed 235-184.

ENDA prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of a person’s actual or perceived sexual orientation. Rather than preventing discrimination as its name suggests, ENDA actually discriminates against people of religious faith who choose to run their businesses and organizations based on personal and religious conviction. Those convictions call for them to take into account a prospective employee’s sexual orientation.

“We’re profoundly disappointed in our Wisconsin delegation. Apparently Republican Representative Ryan and Democratic Representatives Tammy Baldwin (2nd), Ron Kind (3rd), Gwen Moore (4th), Dave Obey (7th) and Steve Kagen (8th) are willing to jeopardize the religious freedoms of Christian business owners in order to give a very small group of people special protections. Christian business owners shouldn’t be forced to hire people whose values and lifestyles are opposed to theirs. In America, we are supposed to have religious freedom—freedom that allows our faith to impact every area of our lives, including how we run our businesses and who we hire. ENDA threatens all of this,” said Appling, president of Wisconsin Family Action.

The bill was amended during the floor debate. One amendment clarifies that the bill will not alter the federal Defense of Marriage Act in any way and also expands the religious exemption to include all religious organizations, including Christian schools. The second amendment allows employers to condition employment based on marital status. Wisconsin Representative Tammy Baldwin (D-2nd) introduced an amendment that would have added “transgendered” persons to the protected classes. This amendment was withdrawn before a vote was taken.

A US Senate version of ENDA is expected in the next few weeks.

Wisconsin Family Action is the legislative action arm of Wisconsin Family Council.