

Response to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act legislation

Southern Indiana proudly welcomes and embraces people and visitors of all persuasions, abilities, backgrounds, orientations and identities. Diversity and openness are key to who we are as Americans.

Inflammatory rhetoric on both sides of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is damaging to the tourism community. The Indiana law is being politicized and Indiana tourism entities are among the first to suffer in this heated debate.

Gay rights supporter and Indiana University law professor Donald Conkle states in an [Indianapolis Star editorial](#) that “granting religious believers legal consideration does not mean that their religious objections will always be upheld.”

We are not legal scholars, so we cannot comment on what this law will do in practice. However, the Southern Indiana Clark-Floyd Counties Convention & Tourism Bureau wishes to state expressly that we abhor discrimination of any kind.

We are rallying the tourism community to ensure visitors will feel welcome in our state despite the rhetoric being bandied about on this issue. The beauty of travel is that it allows people to meet and talk with others who have different views and perspectives. As Mark Twain so famously said, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.”

Unfortunately, the first to feel the loss of business because of this issue will be the many frontline tourism employees who do a great job every day of welcoming **all** to Indiana. It saddens us that those who depend on tourism for their livelihood – tour guides, servers, hotel clerks, independent business owners, and others – will suffer a loss of income.

Boycotting our state hurts those frontline employees the most. It also builds walls and stifles healthy discussion between diverse people.

This has been a hard week for many Hoosiers, but we will continue to invite and welcome visitors no matter what their stories are. We want to share in those stories and continue to weave them into the fabric of southern Indiana.

The Clark Floyd Counties Convention & Tourism Bureau, our partners, and our colleagues in destinations around the state are famous for our Hoosier hospitality, and that remains unchanged.