

# ADF seeks signatures opposing 'Respect for Marriage Act'

*By Lonnie Wilkey*

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Don't be fooled or deceived by the "Respect for Marriage Act," currently under consideration by the United States Senate.

The proposed bill "threatens Americans who follow the biblical definition of marriage," said Harrison Smith of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). ADF partners with Christian organizations, including the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board [and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board], to defend religious liberty in the United States.

Mike Griffin, public affairs representative for the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, added in a column posted at [christianindex.org](http://christianindex.org) that the proposed bill "should be of concern to every pastor and person of faith."

Smith observed that many Senators are "still on the fence" as to how they will vote. The vote is expected to take place in less than two weeks, he added.

The ADF website ([adflegal.org](http://adflegal.org)) notes that "the deceptively named bill enshrines same-sex marriage into federal law and jeopardizes the religious freedom of millions of Americans who follow the biblical definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman."

The website cites three reasons why the bill should cause churches and ministries grave concern:

- It would require the federal government to recognize any state's definition of marriage, such as polygamous marriages, without any limitations.

- It would empower activist groups to sue religious individuals and organizations that believe that marriage is only between one man and one woman.
- It could jeopardize the tax-exempt status of non-profit organizations that believe marriage is only between one man and one woman.

In July, 83 religious groups signed and mailed a letter to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell asking him to oppose the bill. Smith said that ADF will send a letter to the senators expressing concerns with the proposed bill and calling for them to oppose it.

"We need at least 1,000 signatures from ministry leaders by [Friday, Sept. 2]. Ministry leaders can read and sign the letter by visiting: <https://adfchurchalliance.org/respect-for-marriage-act>," he said.

Smith stressed that ADF's position on people "who experience same-sex attraction is that they should be treated with the same respect and compassion as anyone, on account of their human dignity, and never be subject to unjust discrimination.

"It was never discrimination, however, to simply maintain that an inherent aspect of the definition of marriage itself is the complementarity between the two sexes. Marriage as a lifelong, exclusive union of one man and one woman, and open to new life, is not just a religious ideal.

"It is, on the whole, what is best for society in a concrete sense, especially for children," Smith said.

*Editor's Notes: Wilkey is editor of the Baptist and Reflector, news journal of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board.*

*The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is in partnership with ADF to allow member churches to receive legal benefits*

*from the organization. For more information, click here.*