

Commission on Human Rights

Kentucky Commission on Human Rights statement concerning Governor Steve Beshear's veto today of House Bill 279

Press Release Date: Friday, March 22, 2013
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The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights has learned that Governor Steve Beshear this afternoon announced he vetoed House Bill 279.

John Johnson, executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, said:

“The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights strongly supports Governor Beshear’s veto of House Bill 279. The commission now strongly urges the General Assembly not to override the Governor’s wise veto.

“House Bill 279, referred to as ‘the Religious Freedom bill,’ as written, will not serve the cause of protecting religious freedom. Rather, it will threaten the religious freedom of all, by giving special protections to those few who may claim that their otherwise unlawful discriminatory actions are justified by a ‘sincerely held religious belief.’ In effect, House Bill 279 makes individual persons a law unto themselves, providing a convenient justification for infringing on the civil rights of others in violation of the Kentucky Civil Rights Act. This is not the intention of religious freedom.”

The commission urges the public to leave a message for the General Assembly asking members not to override the governor’s veto on House Bill 279. The legislature meets on Monday and Tuesday, which will be the last two days of the legislative session. People may leave this message for the entire assembly with one phone call to the state Legislative Message Line at (800) 372-7181.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the Commonwealth of Kentucky authority that enforces the Kentucky Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination in the areas of public accommodations, employment, housing and financial transactions.

For more information or for help with discrimination, call the commission at 1.800.292.5566.