

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, April 7, 2015

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**FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CALL FOR DIGNITY AND EQUALITY FOR ALL PEOPLE, OPPOSE INTRODUCTION OF SO-CALLED “RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACT”**

*Urges the Ohio General Assembly to refrain from introducing a so-called “Religious Freedom Restoration Act” and encourages the amendment of the Ohio Revised Code to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity*

This morning, during their weekly General Session meeting, the Franklin County, Ohio, Board of County Commissioners reaffirmed their commitment to dignity and equality for all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, age, disability, religion or other characteristics.

Recognizing that Franklin County is an open and welcoming County for all residents and visitors, the Board of Commissioners approved a resolution urging the Ohio General Assembly to refrain from introducing a far-reaching, so-called “Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA),” as was recently done in Indiana, and encouraging the Ohio General Assembly to amend the Ohio Revised Code to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Franklin County, Ohio resolution reads, in part, “the implementation of such a bill could have far-reaching implications for those who seek to use the RFRA to allow their religious beliefs to discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, race, gender or other characteristics that run afoul of someone’s religious beliefs, with potentially far-reaching implications in everyone’s daily lives, whether one is shopping in a store, eating at a restaurant, seeking treatment in a doctor’s office, or trying to find housing, to name just a few instances...”

Furthermore, the Board recognizes that religion is a protected class and as such, there is no need to “restore” religious freedom – it is protected.

The entire Franklin County Board of Commissioners’ resolution, which will be delivered to the Ohio Governor, Speaker of the Ohio House and President of the Ohio Senate, and to the Franklin County legislative delegation, can be read on line [here](#).

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**Franklin County, Ohio:** The Franklin County Commissioners employ a Non-Discrimination Policy to not make employment decisions in a discriminatory manner based on “race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability that can not be reasonably accommodated or

veteran status". In 2008, the Franklin County Commissioners adopted resolution 286-08 establishing a policy against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and in 2009, the Board endorsed Ohio House Bill 176, which would have amended the Ohio Revised Code to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. To date, Franklin County continues ongoing efforts to ensure County collective bargaining agreements and County contracts prohibit this same discrimination.

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For more information on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, call the Office of Public Affairs at (614) 525-3322 or visit [www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners](http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners).