



NFALA

NATIONAL FILIPINO AMERICAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

71 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 1800, Chicago, IL 60606

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 26, 2014

Contact: Rudy Figueroa, President
312-803-8880

NFALA CONDEMNS ARIZONA BILL WHICH ENABLES BUSINESSES TO DISCRIMINATE BASED ON RELIGION

CHICAGO — The NATIONAL FILIPINO AMERICAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (NFALA) demands that Arizona Governor Jan Brewer veto Arizona House Bill 2153/Senate Bill 1062 passed by the Arizona state legislature last week. This legislation, which was disguised as a form of “religious expression and religious freedom,” would actively allow individuals and businesses to refuse services to members of the LGBTQ community and opens the door to legalized discrimination against anyone, for any reason, if based on religious belief.

“This bill is a modern day civil rights issue,” said Rudy Figueroa, President of NFALA. “In the past, religion has been used to justify the oppression of people of color, different ethnicities, women and others. We must not remain silent and allow this to happen again. NFALA respects religious freedom and the religious beliefs that people have, but here religion has been used as a tool of oppression to perpetuate prejudice and hate against a specific group of people. It is inexcusable that religion be used to justify discrimination against the LGBTQ community or anyone in this country. NFALA is committed to supporting the civil rights of all members of the community, including our friends and family in the LGBTQ community, and we support their right to be free from discrimination and prejudice.”

The effects of Arizona House Bill 2153/Senate Bill 1062, will allow individuals and businesses to discriminate against anyone who is LGBTQ if those individuals or businesses are acting according to their “religious convictions.” This bill will allow people and businesses to refuse services, deny equal benefits, and discriminate against anyone based on a claim of “free exercise of religion.” If this is allowed, this will harken back to the days when people of color were prevented from using the same restrooms, schools, pools, restaurants, and businesses as white persons during racial segregation. On its face, the bill could be used as justification for discriminating against anyone, on any grounds, so long as a free religious exercise claim is asserted.

Governor Brewer must veto this bill. It will set back our gains in civil rights for decades to come and will legitimize hate and discrimination. NFALA encourages its members to contact Governor Brewer’s office, in order to voice their concerns.

* * * * *

The National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) is a national association of Filipino American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students dedicated to promoting the professional development, interests, and success of Filipino American legal professionals nationwide. NFALA represents over 1,000 attorneys and various state and local Filipino American bar associations. NFALA’s members include large firm attorneys, corporate counsel, non-profit attorneys, solo practitioners and government attorneys. NFALA is the voice for the national Filipino American legal community and strives to fight for equal opportunity and the rights of underserved minority groups.