

## Message From ACA CEO Richard Yep Regarding Tennessee HB 1840/SB 1556

Apr 29, 2016

With Governor Bill Haslam's signature this week, Tennessee became the latest state to sign into law discriminatory "religious freedom" legislation targeting the LGBTQ community. Tennessee's HB 1840/SB 1556 permits counselors to deny services and refer clients based on the provider's "sincerely held principles."

Since this bill was signed and the law went into effect, we've received numerous emails, calls, and messages from members voicing their concerns and questioning misinformation. We want to ensure you—and all our members—that your voice is being heard and viewpoint considered. We are working diligently to ensure that at the center of this debate, our priorities lie with the clients and communities you serve.

Not only does this law invalidate ACA's Code of Ethics—making Tennessee the only state in the nation to do so—it limits the basic services clients have access to, many of whom live in rural areas with few alternatives. We will continue our efforts to ensure laws like this do not become the national standard, and that counselors who improperly or unethically refuse services to clients in need continue to be held accountable.

We ask that if you have a question, comment, or concern, that you email [\*\*myvoice@counseling.org\*\*](mailto:myvoice@counseling.org). In the coming weeks, we will share more information about our efforts and look forward to continuing to provide you with resources to serve clients and communities safely and effectively.

Further, we ask for your patience as our Governing Council and ACA leadership decide our next steps regarding the 2017 ACA Annual Conference & Expo, which is slated to be held in Nashville, Tennessee.

Sincerely,  
Richard Yep, CAE, FASAE  
CEO of the American Counseling Association