

*Howard Center Commentary, 4/11/2016*

## **A Time to Act. Mississippi Just Did.**

On April 5, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant signed into law the *Protecting Freedom of Conscience from Government Discrimination Act*, which exempts people from being required to provide services or goods for the “celebration or recognition of any marriage, based upon or in a manner consistent with a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction.” (Please note that it speaks of “any marriage,” not just same-sex marriage.) Other states are considering similar bills.

Among the predictable rants was the response by the Human Rights Campaign, which vowed that Mississippi “will suffer because of his ignorance and failure of leadership.”

Failure of leadership? *Au contraire*, as the French say. The Governor’s action is leadership at its finest and boldest, manifesting, in the words of the bill’s sponsor, “courage and foresight.”

Those happen to be the very qualities urgently needed now when, as predicted by historian Paul Kengor, the infamous *Obergefell* decision (legalizing same-sex marriage) would become “an extraordinary and extremely damaging wrecking ball for the secular left to attack religious people who disagree with them.”

At stake is what President George Washington insisted are society’s “indispensable supports”—namely “religion and morality”—and what historian Will Durant called “the ultimate foundation of every civilization known to history”—namely the family.

Family, faith, and freedom: these are what the Howard Center fights for as we partner with organizations in America and worldwide to educate and empower leaders and citizens. It is indeed a time to act, and we ask for your support while urging you to do all within your power to preserve and protect the foundation of our society.

May we not look back on this critical time as yet another instance of what Haile Selassie described: “Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted; the indifference of those who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph.”

Sincerely,

E. Douglas Clark