



Atheists. Agnostics. Humanists. Americans.

December 17, 2020

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Bernadette B. Wilson
Executive Officer
Executive Secretariat
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
131 M Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20507

RE: Proposed Updated Compliance Manual on Religious Discrimination, RIN Number 3046-ZA01 / Document Number 2020-25736

Dear Ms. Wilson,

The Secular Coalition for America submits the following comments regarding EEOC's proposed update to the Compliance Manual on Religious Discrimination, released on November 17, 2020.

Our comments specifically regard the proposed manual's section on exceptions to coverage of Title VII.

Executive Order 11246 allows for a widely interpreted, narrow exemption to Title VII for religiously affiliated federal contractors to employ only workers who share the same religion as their employer. The proposed update would expand the list of entities that qualify for the exemption to include for-profit corporations, while at the same time expanding the extent of the exemptions. This unnecessary and harmful expansion would codify, perpetuate, and increase the discrimination of employees under the guise of religious freedom.

The proposed update significantly alters the section declaring who qualifies for the Title VII religious exemption, suggesting the exemption is broad and includes for-profit corporations. This despite being unable to cite a single case in which a court has applied the religious exemption to a for-profit corporation. We are concerned that the proposed update is far too broad and could be interpreted to allow more employers, including those in the private sector, to discriminate in their hiring practices and against their employees.

In conclusion, it is the position of the Secular Coalition for America that the proposed update aims to expand the Title VII religious exemption for employers to the detriment of their employees, and that it should be rejected in its current form. We respectfully encourage the EEOC to work to limit discrimination faced by employees in the public workplace and reject the proposed update.

The Secular Coalition for America is the nation's premier advocacy organization representing atheists, humanists, agnostics, and other nontheists. We lobby the U.S. Congress, White House, and federal agencies on issues of concern to our constituency. Our mission is to increase the visibility of and respect for nontheistic viewpoints in the United States and strengthen the secular character of our government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Allen
Executive Director
Secular Coalition for America

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

American Atheists · American Ethical Union · American Humanist Association · Atheist Alliance of America · Black Nonbelievers, Inc. · Camp Quest Center for Inquiry · Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations · Ex-Muslims of North America · Foundation Beyond Belief · Freethought Society · Freedom from Religion Foundation · Hispanic American Freethinkers · Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers · Recovering from Religion · Secular Student Alliance · Secular Woman · Society for Humanistic Judaism · Unitarian Universalist Humanists