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[www.thelittlehawk.com/staff-mission-statement](http://www.thelittlehawk.com/staff-mission-statement)

The Little Hawk, the student newspaper of City High School, aims to inform, educate and entertain readers; to provide an educational opportunity for the students who produce it; and to provide a medium for commercial advertising.

**Equity Statements**

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Staff Editorial:

Religious Freedom Laws

New laws that could allow for discrimination by businesses in Indiana have ignited a firestorm of controversy



ART BY NOVA MEURICE

I suppose that history is indeed doomed to repeat itself. Those who languish in the minorities are in a constant struggle for equality, and those in power will forever claim that this case of minority suppression is not the same as the last one, that this time it's justified. It is never justified, nor will it ever be. The current struggle for homosexual equality has been grinding slowly forward since the 80s, and has faced one of its largest setbacks so far with the implementation of new religious freedom laws in Indiana.

These laws, among other things, allow for the refusal of a business' services by the business owner on the basis of a religious disagreement with the customer. Being able to legally discriminate against customers is a very slippery slope. One instance of allowed bigotry will allow for the perpetration of countless more, until those politicians who've been salivating at the thought of increased inequality in the form of written law have their dreams realized.

For those of us who live in Iowa City, however, these issues may seem farther away. We live in a very liberal, open, intellectual community, which has always led to the acceptance of societal changes before most of the rest of the country. Even in the days of slavery, abolitionist John

Do you think that businesses should be able to refuse certain people service on a religious basis?

YES: 0

NO: 14

Brown frequently stopped in Iowa City. However, we can't expect the rest of the country to be as progressive in its policy. We generally can't even expect most of the rest of Iowa to be as progressive.

When looking at small isolated incidents like a religious baker refusing to cater a gay wedding, it seems like something could be done to make a compromise and help everyone involved. The problem, however, is that the issue of gay rights is so much more than a few isolated incidents. There is still a large portion of the population who would love to see any type of legislation that even slightly halts sexuality equality. Any law of this type will encourage these people to push for more extreme, and harmful laws. At the moment,

there are many other anti-gay laws that are being proposed across the country, including one seemingly ridiculous law that would strip the salaries of clerks who give marriage licenses to same-sex couples that could gain more traction if the religious freedom law in Indiana passes.

A number of religious bakeries who have been involved in these cases of religious freedom have pointed out the fact that same-sex couples who want wedding catering can simply go to another bakery. Many have accused same-sex couples of intentionally seeking out religious bakeries to cause controversy. Many see that practice as unnecessary and malicious; however, these same sorts of strategies are what pushed the civil rights movement through in the 1960s. Black civil rights activists in the 60s would intentionally sit in diners that had policies against serving black people. By infuriating racist business owners and creating controversy that made it to the front page, they were able to get the support they needed for their cause. The situation is the same today; it's only the issue that has changed.