



22 Cheshvan 5783
November 15, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

We respectfully ask that you oppose the Respect for Marriage Act.

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The proposed Act would adopt, as US policy, a definition of marriage directly contrary to that found in our Bible and to core Judaic belief and religious observance. This has a host of practical ramifications, over and above Congress condemning the Bible as containing backwards, bigoted ideas.

The Act claims to carve out exemptions for religious institutions, and says that those with traditional beliefs are "due proper respect," but in reality threatens to prompt a host of lawsuits, challenges to 501(c)3 status, and more—all avenues that antisemites and the anti-religious will avidly exploit against our community.

This is especially true because it creates a private right of action. The threat of litigation has a profound, chilling effect on free religious expression. None of this is theoretical: bad actors have previously used legislative and legal channels to threaten religious slaughter, circumcision, synagogue operations, and more, and this law will hand the same bad actors an arsenal of new weapons to use against Jewish institutions, rabbinic leaders, and individuals. It will also pose a particular threat to our educational institutions and prevent them from operating freely.

In the current environment, a Jewish person, especially if dressed in distinctively Jewish fashion, is several times more likely to be victimized by a hate crime than a member of any other minority. Please do not hand bad actors new methods to attack our religious freedom and way of life. We strongly urge and beseech all Senators to vote no.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yaakov Menken".

Rabbi Yaakov Menken
Managing Director