

TRANSADVOCATE

“Right to discriminate” bill supports KKK’s right to racial segregation says Sen Yarbrough’s office

By Cristan Williams

Published February 21, 2014 | Updated March 31, 2026

https://www.transadvocate.com/right-to-discriminate-bill-supports-kkks-right-to-racial-segregation-says-sen-yarbroughs-office_n_12589.htm

Abstract

By Cristan Williams @cristanwilliams Arizona state senator, Steve Yarbrough (R) sponsored Senate Bill 1062, hailed as a “property rights” bill aimed at ensuring that business owners and social service organizations would have the right to discriminate on the basis of religious freedom. Devon Mills, speaking for Yarbrough’s office said, “It allows business owners to use religion as [...]

Article

By Cristan Williams

@cristanwilliams

Arizona state senator, Steve Yarbrough (R) sponsored Senate Bill 1062, hailed as a “property rights” bill aimed at ensuring that business owners and social service organizations would have the right to discriminate on the basis of religious freedom. Devon Mills, speaking for Yarbrough’s office said, “It allows business owners to use religion as a reason to deny someone business if it conflicts with their religious belief.”

I Arizona Democrats, who argue the legislation is a way to legalize discrimination against LGBT individuals, sponsored eight amendments in an attempt to thwart the legislation -- all of which were rejected by Senate Republicans.

“SB 1062 permits discrimination under the guise of religious freedom,” state Senate Democratic Leader Anna Tovar said in a statement Wednesday. “With the express consent of Republicans in this Legislature, many Arizonans will find themselves members of a separate and unequal class under this law because of their sexual orientation. This bill may also open the door to discriminate based on race, familial status, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability.”

As testament to the bill’s mission, state Sen. Steve Yarbrough (R), one of three lawmakers sponsoring the bill, cited a 2013 New Mexico Supreme Court ruling that banned wedding photographers from refusing to shoot same-sex ceremonies, according to the Associated Press. - HuffPo

After hearing about the various ways Yarbrough’s bill supports bigotry, I called his office to get the skinny on precisely how bigoted Yarbrough is willing to be:*

Cristan Williams: “I understand that this is basically a property owner rights [bill]. If a gay couple, or

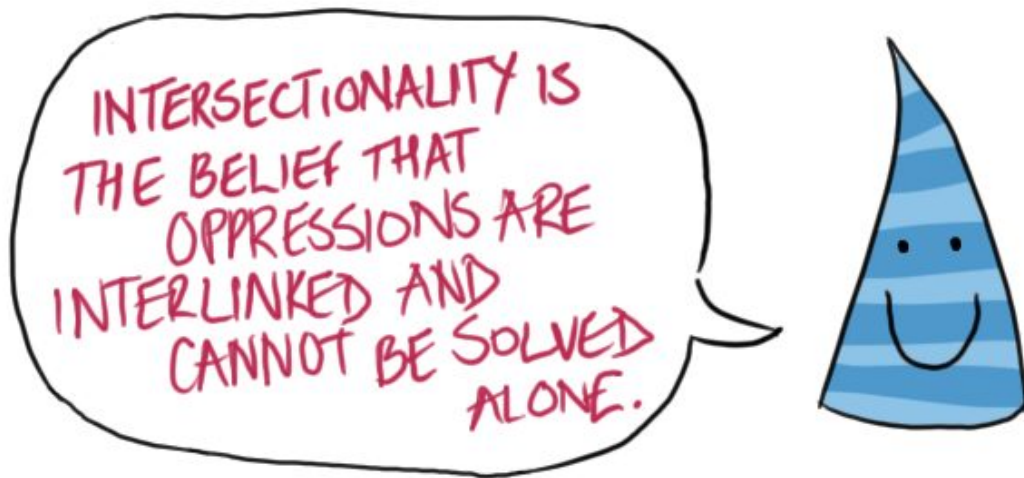
something like that, came in a restaurant and I as a restaurant-owner didn't endorse that lifestyle, I wouldn't have to serve them, I wouldn't have to have those customers at my store. I wouldn't risk being sued over [my discrimination], correct?

Yarbrough's Office: "If you could object to someone coming in, if it was based on a religious objection, that is correct."

CW: "Organizations like the Klan are explicitly religious organisations. If you had a racist person who was part of [the KKK], if it was their sincere belief that the curse of Ham is correct, [do these] bills open the door to segregation again. Correct?"

YO: "If one could prove that preforming an action or an action is motivated by that belief, the belief severally held, and if they did that it would substantially burden their beliefs, then yes, that is correct.

It's no surprise to find that Arizona Rep. John Kavanagh (R) supports a move in this direction for his state. "All this bill does is protect the religious freedom that the people who began this country came here to establish," Kavanagh said. I debated Kavanagh when he attempted to pass a bill that would ban trans people from using restrooms. When I spoke with Monica Roberts about this story she reminded me, "All oppressions are linked."



OPPRESSIONS ARE NOT ISOLATED.
INTERSECTIONALITY NOW!

Figure 1. bobslide6[1]

Intersectionality, a fun guide

The same folks who’ve made a career out of attacking LGBT people are in favor of a bill they know will empower hate groups like the Klan. “This is a license to discriminate,” said EJ Montini of The Arizona Republic. “It essentially will allow people to refuse service to people who may be gay or be of other religions.” As to other groups that are at risk Montini said, “There could be a lot of exposure in this particular bill.” Driving home the bigoted roots of this bill, he continued, “This is extremists in the Legislature essentially appeasing zealots out in the community, it’s really a shame.”

*When I do fact-checking and want a bigoted person or system to be a little more honest about their feelings and motivations, I generally call them up and truthfully identify myself as calling from Houston, TEXAS. I sometimes add a bit of an East Texas twang and/or vernacular in there too. Thus far, I’ve not been disappointed in the assumptions people draw about me being a Texan; people/systems feel fairly comfortable opening up to me.

Tip this TransAdvocate!

[Figure] TipJar

Writers for the TransAdvocate work hard to bring you news and commentary. If you found this article meaningful, let the author know that you appreciate the work they do with a tip!

[/column]

[column size=”one-half” last=”true”]

Suggested citation

Cristan Williams. ““Right to discriminate” bill supports KKK’s right to racial segregation says Sen Yarbrough’s office.” TransAdvocate, February 21, 2014.

https://www.transadvocate.com/right-to-discriminate-bill-supports-kkks-right-to-racial-segregation-says-sen-yarbroughs-office_n_12589.htm