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Religious Exemption Laws

No updates required since April 11, 2024

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Background

Religious exemptions are a broad category of laws that create carveouts or exceptions to existing laws, such as nondiscrimination laws. In doing so, they create a license to discriminate.

Broad Religious Exemption Laws (“RFRAs”): Broad state religious exemption laws, sometimes called “Religious Freedom Restoration Acts” or RFRAs, permit people, churches, non-profit organizations, and sometimes corporations to seek exemptions from state laws that they say burden their religious beliefs. The individual person or organization must seek out an exemption, such as through court proceedings.

Targeted Religious Exemptions: Targeted exemptions provide a blanket exemption, or license to discriminate, to anyone operating in a specific area such as child welfare services, medical care, businesses serving the public, or government officials/employees solemnizing marriages. The person or organization does not need to seek out this exemption as with RFRAs; it is a blanket license to discriminate. There are many types of targeted exemptions, including but not limited to:

- **Child Welfare Services:** Permits child-placing agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs.
- **Medical Providers:** Permits medical providers to refuse to serve LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with the provider’s (or provider’s employer’s) religious beliefs.
- **Business Services:** Permits businesses to deny services (such as wedding-related services) to LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs.
- **State Officials/Marriage Solemnization:** Permits state and local government employees and officials to decline to marry couples of whose marriage they disapprove.

Equality Maps & Additional Resources

- See our [Equality Maps: Religious Exemption Laws](#), which is updated and maintained in real time alongside this document.
- See MAP’s related reports:
 - (Aug 2023) [Under Fire: Enshrining Inequality for LGBTQ People](#)
 - (June 2018) [Putting Children at Risk: How Efforts to Undermine Marriage Equality Harm Children](#)
 - (March 2018) [Religious Refusals in Health Care: A Prescription for Disaster](#)
 - And many more at our [Religious Exemptions research landing page](#).



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Chronology

(by date of governor signature or veto override; not by effective date)

Targeted Exemptions: Child Welfare Services

1. North Dakota – [§50-12-07.1](#) – 2003
2. Virginia – [H189/S349](#) – April 9, 2012
3. Michigan – [HB 4188](#), [HB 4189](#), [HB 4190](#) – June 11, 2015
 - a. Note, this applies only to state-licensed agencies that do not receive state funding.
4. Mississippi – [HB1523](#) – April 5, 2016
5. South Dakota – [SB149](#) – March 10, 2017
6. Alabama – [HB24](#) – April 28, 2017
 - a. Note, this applies only to state-licensed agencies that do not receive state funding.
7. Texas – [HB3859](#) – June 15, 2017
8. Oklahoma – [SB1140](#) – May 11, 2018
9. Kansas – [SB284](#) – May 18, 2018
10. South Carolina – [HB4950](#) – August 9, 2018
11. Tennessee – [HB836](#) – January 24, 2020
12. Arizona – [SB1399](#) – April 6, 2022
13. Utah – [SB154](#) – March 22, 2023
 - a. Note, this applies only to private agencies.
14. Idaho – [H578](#) – March 24, 2024

Targeted Exemptions: Medical Providers

1. Illinois – [HB725](#) / [P.A. 90-246](#) – 1997
2. Mississippi – [HB1523](#) – April 5, 2016
3. Tennessee – [HB1840](#) – May 2, 2016
 - a. Note, this applies only to counselors and therapists.
4. Alabama – [HB95](#) – April 20, 2017
5. Arkansas – [SB289](#) – March 25, 2021
6. Ohio – [HB110](#) (see p1453-1455) – July 1, 2021
7. South Carolina – [H4776](#) – June 17, 2022
8. Florida – [S1580](#) – May 11, 2023
9. Montana – [HB303](#) – May 3, 2023
10. Idaho – [S1352](#) – March 21, 2024
 - a. Note, this applies only to counselors and therapists.



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Summary Table

States	Broad RFRAs (27 states)	Targeted Exemptions in/for:			
		Child Welfare Services (14 states)	Medical Providers (10 states)	Marriage Related Business Services (2 states)	Public Officials Solemnizing Marriages (3 states)
Alabama	Yes, constitutional	Yes*	Yes	-	-
Alaska	-	-	-	-	-
Arizona	Yes, statutory	Yes	-	-	-
Arkansas	Yes, statutory	-	Yes	-	-
California	-	-	-	-	-
Colorado	-	-	-	-	-
Connecticut	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Delaware	-	-	-	-	-
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	Yes, statutory	-	Yes	-	-
Georgia	-	-	-	-	-
Hawai'i	-	-	-	-	-
Idaho	Yes, statutory	Yes	Yes (mental health only)	-	-
Illinois	Yes, statutory	-	Yes	-	-
Indiana	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Iowa	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Kansas	Yes, statutory	Yes	-	Yes	-
Kentucky	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Louisiana	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Maine	-	-	-	-	-
Maryland	-	-	-	-	-
Massachusetts	-	-	-	-	-
Michigan	-	Yes*	-	-	-
Minnesota	-	-	-	-	-
Mississippi	Yes, statutory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Missouri	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Montana	Yes, statutory	-	Yes	-	-
Nebraska	-	-	-	-	-
Nevada	-	-	-	-	-
New Hampshire	-	-	-	-	-
New Jersey	-	-	-	-	-
New Mexico	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
New York	-	-	-	-	-
North Carolina	-	-	-	-	Yes
North Dakota	Yes, statutory	Yes	-	-	-
Ohio	-	-	Yes	-	-
Oklahoma	Yes, statutory	Yes	-	-	-
Oregon	-	-	-	-	-
Pennsylvania	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Rhode Island	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
South Carolina	Yes, statutory	Yes	Yes	-	-
South Dakota	Yes, statutory	Yes	-	-	-
Tennessee	Yes, statutory	Yes	Yes (mental health only)	-	Yes



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Texas	Yes, statutory	Yes	-	-	-
Utah	Yes, statutory	Yes*	-	-	-
Vermont	-	Yes	-	-	-
Virginia	Yes, statutory	Yes	-	-	-
Washington	-	-	-	-	-
West Virginia	Yes, statutory	-	-	-	-
Wisconsin	-	-	-	-	-
Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-
American Samoa	-	-	-	-	-
Guam	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Mariana Islands	-	-	-	-	-
Puerto Rico	-	-	-	-	-
U.S. Virgin Islands	-	-	-	-	-
	Broad RFRAs <i>(27 states)</i>	Child Welfare Services <i>(14 states)</i>	Medical Providers <i>(10 states)</i>	Marriage Related Business Services <i>(2 states)</i>	Public Officials Solemnizing Marriages <i>(3 states)</i>

*Note, in Alabama, Michigan, and Utah, the state’s religious exemptions for child welfare service providers are narrower in scope and only apply to certain service providers. Please see below in the “State-by-State Sources” section for more detail.



State-by-State Sources & More Detail

Alabama

- State has broad constitutional religious exemption law. See [AL Const. Art I, §3.01](#) (1999).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [HB 24](#) (2017).
 - This exemption is only permitted for agencies that do not receive government funding.
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [HB 95](#) (2017).

Alaska

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Arizona

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [Ariz. Rev. Stat. §41-1493.01](#) (1999).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [SB 1399](#) (2022).

Arkansas

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [SB 975](#) (2015).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [SB 289](#) (2021). See also [SB 199](#) (2023) that specifically says “State law shall not require, or be construed to require, a healthcare professional to perform a gender transition procedure.”

California

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Colorado

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Connecticut

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [CT Gen. Stat. Ann §52-571b](#) (1993).

Delaware

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

District of Columbia

- State has none of these religious exemption laws



Florida

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [FL Stat. Ann. §§761.01-05](#) (1998).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [S 1580](#) (2023).

Georgia

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Hawai`i

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Idaho

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [ID Code Ann §§ 73-401-404](#) (2000).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [H 578](#) (2024).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [S 1352](#) (2024).
 - Note, this applies to counselors and therapists only.

Illinois

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [775 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 35/1-99](#) (1998).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [745 ILCS 70/1](#) and [HB 725](#) (1997); amended by [SB 1564](#) (2016) to require that when providers refuse to give care, they must give referrals or other written information about other ways to access needed care.

Indiana

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [IN Code Sec. 1.IC 34-13-9](#) or [SB 101](#) (2015).

Iowa

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [SF 2095](#) (2024).

Kansas

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [K.S.A. 60-5301-05](#) (2013).
- State has targeted religious exemption that that permits private businesses to deny services to married same-sex couples. See [Kansas Executive Order 15-05](#) (2015).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [SB 284](#) (2018).

Kentucky

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [Ky. Rev. Stat. §446.350](#) (2013).



Louisiana

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [La. Rev. Stat. §§ 13:5231-5242](#) (2010).

Maine

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Maryland

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Massachusetts

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Michigan

- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs.
 - This exemption is only permitted for agencies that do not receive government funding.
 - See [HB 4188](#) (2015), [HB 4189](#) (2015), [HB 4190](#) (2015), and [Dumont settlement](#) (2019).

Minnesota

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Mississippi

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [SB 2681](#) (2014).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [HB 1523](#) (2016).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [HB 1523](#) (2016).
- State has targeted religious exemption that that permits private businesses to deny services to married same-sex couples. See [HB 1523](#) (2016).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state and local officials to decline to marry couples of whose marriage they disapprove. See [HB 1523](#) (2016).

Missouri

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [Mo. Ann. Stat. §§ 1.302-.307](#) (2004).

Montana

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [SB 215](#) (2021).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [HB 303](#) (2023).

Nebraska

- State has none of these religious exemption laws



Nevada

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

New Hampshire

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

New Jersey

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

New Mexico

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [N.M. Stat. §§28-22-1, et seq.](#) (2000).

New York

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

North Carolina

- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state and local officials to decline to marry couples of whose marriage they disapprove. See [N.C. Gen. Stat. § 51-5.5](#) or [SB 2](#) (2015).

North Dakota

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [HB 1136](#) (2023).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [ND Century Code §50-12-07.1](#) (2003).

Ohio

- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [HB 110](#) (2021; amendment in state budget, see [pgs.1453-1455](#)).

Oklahoma

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 51, §§251-258](#) (2000), and expanded by [SB 404](#) (2023).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [SB 1140](#) (2018).

Oregon

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Pennsylvania

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [71 Pa. Stat. tit. 71, 2401-2407](#) (2002).



Rhode Island

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-80.1](#) (1993).

South Carolina

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [S.C. Code §1-32-10 et seq.](#) (1999).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [H 4950, §38.29](#) (2018).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [H 4776](#) (2022).

South Dakota

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [SB 124](#) (2021).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [SB 149](#) (2017).

Tennessee

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-1-407](#) (2009).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ people and others. See [TN Code Ann. § 63-22-302](#) (2016).
 - Note, this applies to counselors and therapists only.
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [HB 836](#) (2020).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state and local officials to decline to marry couples of whose marriage they disapprove. See [HB 878/SB 596](#) (2024), and see also [TN Code § 36-3-301\(a\)](#) specifying that public officials are included in this law's exemption.

Texas

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [TX Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code §110.001-.012](#) (1999).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [HB 3859](#) (2017).



Utah

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [SB 150](#) (2024).
- State has targeted religious exemption that applies only to private individuals or agencies, and while it allows those private agencies to refuse to serve individuals according to the agencies' religious beliefs, it also requires the agency to refer those individuals to other agencies. See [SB 154](#) (2023).
- State has targeted law that permits religious officials to decline to marry couples of whose marriage they disapprove. Law only applies to religious officials, not government employees. See [Utah Code 63G-20-101](#) (2015).

Vermont

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Virginia

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [Va. Code Ann. §57-1 to -2.1](#) (2007).
- State has targeted religious exemption that permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and others, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs. See [Va. Code Ann § 63.2-1709.3](#) or [S 349/H 189](#) (2012).

Washington

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

West Virginia

- State has broad statutory religious exemption law. See [HB 3042](#) (2023).

Wisconsin

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

Wyoming

- State has none of these religious exemption laws

U.S. Territories

American Samoa

- Territory has none of these religious exemption laws

Guam

- Territory has none of these religious exemption laws

Northern Mariana Islands

- Territory has none of these religious exemption laws



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Puerto Rico

- Territory has none of these religious exemption laws

U.S. Virgin Islands

- Territory has none of these religious exemption laws