Church State Council Legislative Update! April 26, 2012

California Workplace Religious Freedom Act, AB 1964 Sails Through Assembly Judiciary Committee, 9-0!

Thanks in no small measure to your phone calls, emails and letters, AB 1964, a bill to strengthen laws requiring employers to provide religious accommodation for workers, passed with strong bi-partisan support in the Assembly Judiciary Committee on Tuesday.

Entering the state capitol on Tuesday, we had to fight our way through a crowd of hundreds waiting to testify on a bill to outlaw the use of dogs to hunt bears and bobcats. Yet, no such crowd supported workers' right not to be fired on account of their religious observances or appearance!
complacency. Please join us for this effort, no matter how long it takes!

The bill will be heard next in Assembly Appropriations Committee, but we don’t know when. So we want to reach out to both Appropriations committee members, and our own Assembly members.

WHAT TO DO NOW!

CALL ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE LISTED BELOW!

VISIT THE LOCAL DISTRICT OFFICE OF YOUR STATE ASSEMBLY MEMBER TO URGE SUPPORT FOR AB 1964. TAKE THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SABBATH WORK PROBLEMS, SO THEY CAN TELL THEIR STORIES.

PHONE CALLS, EMAILS AND LETTERS TO YOUR OWN ASSEMBLY MEMBER TO URGE SUPPORT.

DISTRIBUTE THIS WIDELY, AND URGE OTHERS TO SUPPORT THE BILL

FIND YOUR ASSEMBLY MEMBER HERE: HTTP://192.234.213.69/AMAPSEARCH

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Talking Points on AB 1964:

Every business day, Californians lose their job for no other “crime” than their faith.

The promise of equal employment opportunity has eluded thousands on account of their religious observances or appearance.

People of all faiths want to attend regular weekly services, and participate in a faith community. Employers can readily accommodate such scheduling needs.

People of many faiths express their faith in some manner through their appearance, with beards, headcoverings and the like. This should not disqualify them from employment, or require them to be segregated from the public.

Legitimate uniform and grooming requirements need not be so restrictive as to exclude entire religious groups from entire industries.

Employers are confused about their legal obligations, and too often, do very little to provide religious accommodation.

The legal standard requiring employers to demonstrate a legitimate undue hardship to justify denial of religious accommodation is a sensible balance of rights and interests between the employer and the worker. The standard has been “significant difficulty or expense,” but employers don’t realize it. AB 1964 will make this clear and explicit.

Employers can provide religious accommodations far more often and easily than they even realize.

The problem for Seventh-day Adventists being unable to obtain Sabbath accommodation has reached epidemic proportions. AB 1964 is expected to alleviate many of these problems.