



Office of the Governor Nathan Deal
206 Washington Street
111 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

March 29, 2018

Dear Governor Deal,

The Associated Collegiate Press and College Media Association respectfully ask for your promise to veto Senate Bill 375. Any law that basically legalizes discrimination is ethically wrong, economically unwise and detrimental to the freedoms of many Georgians.

Our organizations are planning to host the fall national college media convention in Atlanta in October 2020. When we booked this location, we were excited about the cultural and media connections we were going to be able to offer our attendees. Georgia is the home of Ebenezer Baptist Church, the MLK museum, and the filming locations of some of the world's most popular movies and television shows. Not to mention CNN and TBS locations in town.

Our fall convention typically attracts 1,700-2,200 college students and advisers from around the country. These attendees and their outlets embody the First Amendment's tenets, so they are understandably hesitant to spend their precious higher education dollars in a state that is limiting freedoms to even a portion of the population. The approval of SB 375 would also immediately make Georgia subject to AB 1887 in California. Losing state-supported travel from our most populous state would be a black eye to Georgia's reputation and immeasurably damaging to Georgia's economy. Our most recent fall convention was in Dallas, Texas, another state affected by the California travel ban, and we noticed that our attendance numbers were down. We don't want that to happen for our Atlanta convention, and we hope you don't either.

SB 375, while under the guise of ensuring freedom of religion, will basically legalize discrimination and prevent people from enjoying basic human rights. It would be a black mark on the state, and would prevent our organizations, and those we affiliate with, from holding future events in Georgia.

We ask that you consider the negative impact such a law would have on Georgia. If organizations like ACP and CMA are already struggling with the implications of hosting a convention in Georgia, imagine what other organizations are dealing with. Please stand by Georgia businesses and its tourist industry and promise to veto this harmful bill.

Respectfully,

Laura Widmer
Executive Director, Associated Collegiate Press

Chris Evans,
President, College Media Association

Allison Bennett Dyche
Vice President, Member Services, CMA
Georgia Southern, 2000

Kelley Lash
Past President, CMA
Georgia Southern, 2000, 2006

Bryce McNeil
Secretary, CMA
Georgia State, 2009
Assistant Director for Student Media,
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