

1 April 2015

The Honorable Mike Pence
Office of the Governor
Statehouse
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797

Dear Governor Pence,

On 26 March 2015 you signed into law the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Since sexual orientation is not a protected class in Indiana, this new law may well lead to legal discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered members of our communities. As you know, a number of prominent corporate and non-profit organizations from inside and outside Indiana have weighed in with their deep concerns about the potential negative impacts of this law, and some of these organizations have cancelled or threatened to cancel future business in the state.

The American Astronomical Society (AAS) and American Geophysical Union (AGU) are scheduled to hold the jointly sponsored Triennial Earth-Sun Summit meeting on 26-30 April in Indianapolis. We are committed to welcoming every meeting attendee, and to providing a professional atmosphere to all. Given the very short time frame and contractual commitments, we cannot cancel the meeting without severe impact to the important scientific goals of this once-every-three-years event. However, we wish to express our strong support for members of the communities that may be impacted negatively by discriminatory legislation of the kind implemented by the state of Indiana. Both of our societies have long-standing policies that all people be treated with equal courtesy and respect—regardless of gender, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, or national origin—at our professional meetings.

On behalf of our combined 69,000 members, the AAS Council and AGU Board of Directors reaffirm the importance of inclusion to our mission to enhance and share humanity's scientific understanding of the universe. Only when all Earth and space scientists feel welcome and supported in the profession can our discipline realize its full potential for excellence.

Sincerely,



C. Megan Urry
President
American Astronomical Society



Margaret Leinen
President
American Geophysical Union

cc: Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard; Kevin Brinegar, President, Indiana Chamber; Michael Huber, President & CEO, Indy Chamber; Leonard Hoops, President & CEO, Visit Indy