



REPORT

from the Capital

New survey highlights America's changing religious demographics

The notion of America as a mostly white, mostly Christian country is rapidly becoming a fact for the history books.

"The U.S. religious landscape is undergoing a dramatic transformation that is fundamentally reshaping American politics and culture," said Dan Cox, research director for Public Religion Research Institute.

In February, PRRI released the American Values Atlas, an interactive online tool that compiles data about Americans' opinions, identities, and values. One of the biggest takeaways of this year's study was that, for the first time ever, America is not a majority Protestant nation.

Part of this shift is due to the growing number of religiously unaffiliated Americans, now at 22 percent nationally and 34 percent of young people.

The study also revealed that in 19 states, white Christians are now a minority. The list of states where this is the case includes a few surprises. Several Bible Belt states such as Georgia (No. 16) made the list; Texas (No. 7) had the same population of white Christians as New York (No. 5).

While one might want to blame these shifts

on "secularism," one force at work seems to be America's increasing ethnic diversity. According to PRRI, Hispanic Catholics are a growing proportion of Catholics and evangelical Protestants are becoming less white.

PRRI's definition of "white Christian" includes evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Mormons who identify as "white, non-Hispanic."

According to PRRI, "The American Values Atlas draws upon 50,000 annual telephone interviews among a random sample of Americans to deliver an unprecedented level of detail about the United States' cultural and religious landscape." The organization plans to conduct a new wave of interviews each year to update the American Values Atlas so it will stay current with America's changing demographic, cultural and political landscape. The atlas can be accessed online at <http://ava.publicreligion.org>.

See page 2 of this magazine for survey results from The Barna Group on how Americans mark their personal identity.

—Jonathan Merritt, Religion News Service
with BJC Staff Reports

Magazine of the
Baptist Joint Committee
for Religious Liberty

Vol. 70 No. 4

April 2015

INSIDE:

- Georgia bill 2
- Political campaigns 3
- Int'l liberty 4-5
- Utah legislation 6

Connect with the BJC

BJCOnline.org



[BJCOnline.org/
Blog](http://BJCOnline.org/Blog)



[Facebook.com/
ReligiousLiberty](https://www.facebook.com/ReligiousLiberty)



[@BJContheHill](https://twitter.com/BJContheHill)

Top states with a minority of white Christians

State	% of white Christians
Hawaii	20
California	25
New Mexico	33
Nevada	36
New York	37
Alaska	37
Texas	37
Maryland	38
Arizona	38
Washington	42
Florida	42
Oregon	43
New Jersey	43

Religious tradition nationwide

Response	%
Unaffiliated	22
White evangelical Prot.	18
White mainline Protestant	14
White Catholic	13
Black Protestant	8
Hispanic Catholic	8
Hispanic Protestant	3
Other non-white Protestant	2
Other non-white Catholic	2
Mormon	2
Jewish	2
Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and "other" all 1% each.	
Unitarian/Universalist results were less than .5%.	

New poll: Faith is not first in personal identity

When you talk about yourself, what markers of personal identity come first?

For most Americans, family is in the top spot (62 percent) followed by “being an American” (52 percent). “Religious faith” falls steeply to third place (38 percent) – if it’s mentioned at all, according to a survey released March 19 by The Barna Group.

The California-based Christian research company found another 18 percent of those surveyed said faith had a little to do with idea of who they are and nearly 20 percent scored it at zero influence.

The people Barna qualifies as “practicing” Christians (Catholics, Protestants and Mormons who say they have attended church at least once in the last month and/or say religion is important to them) scored faith highly at a rate more than double the national average. Evangelicals led the way with the strongest faith-first identity ties.

The survey also found only 37 percent of self-identified Christians (Barna definition) are practicing while 64 percent are non-practicing, said Roxanne Stone, a vice president at Barna Group and the designer and analyst on the study.

The results were also skewed by age:

- Family first: Millennials (53 percent); Gen X-ers (61 percent); Baby Boomers (64 percent); Elders (76 percent)

- Being an American: Millennials (34 percent); Gen X-ers (37 percent); Baby Boomers (66 percent); Elders (80 percent)

- Religious faith: Millennials (28 percent); Gen X-ers (34 percent); Baby Boomers (45 percent); Elders (46 percent)

Barna surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults, conducted online from February 3 to February 11, 2015. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Stone observed, “Gen-Xers and Millennials have a reputation for wanting to be individualists — for wanting to break away from traditional cultural narratives and to resist being ‘boxed in’ by what they perceive as limiting expectations.”

Will young evangelicals shift as they age? There’s no guarantee of that.

Robert Jones, CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, drawing on their 2014 American Values Survey research, said white evangelicals may be facing the decline that mainline Protestant denominations faced years ago.

He looked at the ratio of seniors to people under age 30 in their survey and found there are “three times as many young unaffiliated (no religious identity) as there are white evangelicals under 30. There was a time when evangelicals crowed about mainline decline and blamed it on liberal theology. But if you look at the millennial market share among evangelicals — it’s now exactly the same as it is for the mainline — 10 percent,” said Jones.

—Cathy Lynn Grossman, *Religion News Service with BJC Staff Reports*

Hollman discusses Georgia religious freedom bill

GAINESVILLE, Ga. — A group of Cooperative Baptist pastors gathered March 17 at First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Georgia, for a luncheon and conversation on religious freedom with Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel Holly Hollman.

The event, sponsored by Faith in Public Life, a faith-based public policy group based in Washington, D.C., came amid a contentious debate across the state over pending religious freedom legislation. On March 5, the Georgia Senate unexpectedly passed the “Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act” or Senate Bill 129, which forbids the government from substantially burdening a person’s exercise of religion unless doing so is essential to achieve a compelling governmental interest and is the least restrictive means of achieving that interest.

Opponents stressed that SB 129 may weaken local anti-discrimination ordinances in Georgia cities, including Atlanta, that protect against discrimination on the basis

of sexual orientation. Meanwhile, supporters contend that the purpose of the religious freedom bill is to make it more difficult for local governments to infringe on the freedoms of Georgia residents.

Other states across the country have been engaged in similar debates over various religious freedom bills, including Indiana and Arkansas.

Legal scholars say that although the Georgia Senate bill closely mirrors the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, it differs in small but important ways, imposing a heightened requirement on state and local governments to justify burdening a person’s religious exercise.



BJC General Counsel Holly Hollman speaks with pastors and religious leaders about religious freedom and legislation at First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Georgia.

REFLECTIONS

Ten commandments for campaigns

The 2016 election season began in March when Senator Ted Cruz, R-Texas, announced his candidacy for president of the United States at Liberty University's convocation in Lynchburg, Virginia.

The rollout was carefully orchestrated to appeal to conservative Christians: Liberty is the largest Christian university in the world, it's in a critical purple state — Virginia, and it guaranteed a large audience — convocations are mandatory at Liberty.

Much of the relatively short speech was biographical and testimonial. Religious themes were pervasive. Sen. Cruz mentioned God five times and Jesus Christ twice. This was not improper; candidates for office do not check their faith at the door when they run for or serve in public office. When properly done, candidates' talk about their faith can help us know who they are, learn what makes them tick and examine their moral core.

Some of what the senator said I agree with, such as his assertion that religious liberty comes from the hand of Almighty God, not the state. I disagree with other things that he put forth, like his applauding of vouchers for parochial schools and accusing the federal government of “wag[ing] an assault on our religious liberty.” But, Sen. Cruz has every right to disclose his Christian faith and discuss what his faith means to him in his speeches and public rhetoric.

That said, danger always lurks when we meld religion and politics. And, now is a propitious time to start thinking again about how we combine the two with subtlety and integrity while keeping an eye to the constitutional ban on religious tests for public office (Article VI, U.S. Constitution). Yes, that provision technically only bans legal religious qualifications for office imposed by government, but, as I have often argued, we should make every effort, as good citizens, to live up to the *spirit* as well as the letter of the religious test ban.

Although religion is at home in the American public square and is certainly relevant to the political conversation, it's wrong to impose a rigorous religious litmus test in how we conduct our politics and the way we decide whom to trust to lead our nation.

Several years ago my friend — and now Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom — Rabbi David Saperstein put forth “Ten Commandments for a Proper Relationship Between Religion & Politics.” We would do well

to heed this decalogue (slightly modified by me) over the upcoming 18 months:

For candidates:

1. Thou shalt offer an explanation to the electorate about how your religious beliefs shape your views on the issues, but never justify policy only on religious beliefs.
2. Thou shalt discuss your views on policy and legal issues that directly affect religion and religious liberty.
3. Thou shalt feel free to use religious language to explain how your beliefs would affect your ability to perform in elected office.
4. Thou shalt feel free to discuss the role religion plays in shaping your values, character and worldview.
5. Thou shalt minimize the use of divisive and exclusive religious language.

For political campaigns and parties:

6. Thou shalt not seek to organize partisan supporters in houses of worship, but should respect their sacred spaces.

For religious groups and leaders:

7. Thou shalt not use religious authority, threats or discipline to coerce the political decisions of candidates and American citizens.

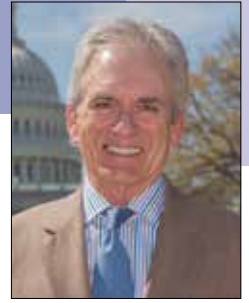
For voters:

8. Thou shalt not base your votes on a candidate's religious beliefs or practices.
9. Thou shalt not blame candidates for isolated, out-of-context statements of their pastors and spiritual advisers.

For everyone:

10. Thou shalt never, explicitly or implicitly, suggest that there is a religious test for holding office.

These are wise injunctions for all campaigns — the presidency and otherwise — for the 2016 elections to follow. They are good for us voters to heed, too. They will help us acknowledge the pertinence of religion to public life while affirming the prohibition on even *de facto* religious tests for public office.



J. Brent Walker
Executive Director

Religious liberty in focus at State D

“EITHER David Saperstein was created with the job of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom in mind, or the job was created with him in mind,” Secretary of State John Kerry declared before a packed room of religious and political leaders, including members of the Baptist Joint Committee staff.

Kerry made his remarks at the U.S. Department of State before administering the oath of office to Rabbi Saperstein as the fourth United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. During the event, Kerry highlighted Saperstein’s “steady voice” and spotlighted the crucial role religious liberty plays in the work of the State Department.

“[S]ince the days of Thomas Jefferson, religious freedom has been at the absolute center of American values and an essential component of our foreign policy, and it is especially relevant right now for all of the obvious and tragic reasons,” Kerry said.

Kerry explained that, while the current generation prides itself on modernity, “we are still grappling with rivalries that have their roots in the distant past.” Kerry pointed out that thousands of people are in prison around the world because of their religious practices or beliefs. “In the Central African Republic, Christian and Muslim militias are engaged in a bloody conflict. In Burma, radical Buddhists are seeking to deny citizenship to an Islamic minority. In the Middle East and Africa, terror networks such as Daesh and Boko Haram are betraying fundamental principles of their own religion of Islam. Major European cities are struggling to cope with the aftermath of terror attacks, amid evidence of anti-Semitism, radicalization, Islamophobia,” Kerry said.

During his remarks, Kerry noted the long journey Saperstein traveled to be confirmed and said that, now

that there finally is an ambassador in place, “we’re going to use him.” After Baptist minister Suzan Johnson Cook resigned from the position in October 2013, the role remained empty for more than a year. Saperstein was nominated in July 2014 and confirmed by the Senate in December with a 62-35 vote.

While the ceremony took place Feb. 20, Saperstein officially began his duties Jan. 6. Kerry revealed that Saperstein already is the chief adviser on religious liberty for both himself and President Barack Obama.

Kerry said they turned to Saperstein because they wanted someone who was “indelibly defined for this passion, someone who was incredibly smart, tough as nails, persuasive, and who has a real appreciation for the ethical values that truly are a critical part of the foundation of every major religious tradition.”

Kerry disclosed that they also wanted someone who “wouldn’t be shy in speaking up for religion, and in pointing out all the contributions that faith communities make each day” in realms including peace-building, preventing genocide, promoting human rights, helping people to escape hunger and more.

“The terrorists may scream from the rooftops that their crimes are God’s will,” Kerry said, “but you can’t frame God for what thugs do.” He also said that, while any “idiot” can commit murder, “there isn’t a sword sharp enough to destroy truth.”

Kerry discussed Saperstein’s “incredible” 40 years at the head of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, where he emerged as one of the country’s leading voices on behalf of social justice. Kerry also mentioned the times during his own Senate career that he worked with Saperstein, including pushing for the proposed Workplace Religious Freedom Act (“which unfortunately never passed,” Kerry noted).

“Religious liberty implies an attitude towards others which extends beyond mere tolerance,” Kerry said. “Naming and shaming has its place here and there, but when it comes to religious freedom, our goal is less to make other countries do what we want them to, rather than to convince them to want what we want, to help them understand that their societies will do better and



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry swears in Rabbi for International Religious Freedom at a ceremony D.C., on Feb. 20, 2015. Also pictured is Saperstein’s Photo: State Department / Public Domain

be more united when their citizens are able to practice every aspect of their faiths without coercion or fear. Religious pluralism encourages and enables contributions from all. Religious discrimination can be the source of conflicts that endanger all.”

Kerry concluded his remarks by administering the oath of office to Saperstein, and the ambassador turned to the crowd to reveal his goals and personal journey to the position.

“During my career, my mandate has indeed covered a wide range of issues, but there are few that have

Department as Saperstein takes oath

been as central to my heart as that of religious freedom,” Saperstein shared. “[L]ike most Jews, I know all too well that over the centuries, the Jewish people have been a quintessential victim of religious persecution, ethnic cleansing, and demonization.”

“This is just one key reason why I stand here today, to affirm that I cannot remain silent,” he declared.



David Saperstein as the new Ambassador-at-Large at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, wife, Ellen Weiss.

Saperstein identified a broad range of threats to religious freedom and religious communities around the world, including the devastation of historic Christian, Yazidi and other communities in Iraq and Syria. He also shed light on discrimination, harassment, persecution, and more affecting Baha'is in Iran, Tibetan Buddhists in China, Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and Rohingya Muslims in Burma. Saperstein noted that, in Western Europe, there is a “steady increase” in anti-Muslim acts and rhetoric and anti-Semitic discourse and violence, such that

“we thought we would never, never see again after World War II.”

Saperstein said he is entering his new set of responsibilities “at a time when forces aligned against religious freedom have grown alarmingly strong.” While religious freedoms flourish in many countries, he pointed out that, according to the Pew Forum, “75 percent of the world’s population lives in countries where religious freedom remains seriously limited and many religious minorities face persecution, intimidation, and harassment.”

“Most vividly, the whole world has witnessed the tragic, violent attacks by ISIL, known as Daesh, against peoples of many faiths – most recently the tragic, tragic targeting of Egyptian Copts in Libya,” Saperstein said. “Even as we must respond to this specific crisis, we will win the battle of freedom only when our long-term goal must be to ensure the internationally recognized right to religious freedom for everyone and every group. It is an urgent task and the needs are great.”

Saperstein affirmed five priorities in his new role, with his first priority focused on using the position “fervently.” In doing so, he plans “to advocate for freedom of thought, conscience, and belief; for the rights of individuals to practice, choose and change their faith safely; not only living their faith through worship, but through teaching, preaching, practice, and observance; as well as the right to hold no religious beliefs; and consequently, to seek strongly anti-blasphemy and apostasy laws.”

His other four priorities include integrating religious freedom robustly and firmly into the United States’ statecraft, ensuring the integrity of the annual International Religious Freedom report, elevating the focus of religious freedom in organizations within the international community, and

drawing on the insights of others in supporting civil society – including religious communities – in shaping policies that contribute to isolating and delegitimizing extremist religious voices.

He said he plans to work closely with Shaun Casey, who serves as U.S. Special Representative for Religion and Global Affairs, to enhance the State Department’s engagement with religious issues and communities.

Saperstein concluded with the charge that the State Department, Congress, administration and nation together can be – and must be – a “beacon of light and hope” to the religiously oppressed in every land.

BJC Executive Director Brent Walker, General Counsel Holly Hollman and Board Chair Curtis Ramsey-Lucas from American Baptist Churches, USA, were among those at the ceremony. Hollman said Saperstein’s comments “energized” the crowd. “After working closely with David Saperstein over the years, we know firsthand his commitment to religious liberty,” she said. “His expertise and passion for this work make him the perfect person to champion religious liberty around the world, and we look forward to supporting his efforts.”

In his first few months as ambassador, Saperstein is speaking out. He testified before Congress on both the threat of ISIL and the need to protect religious liberty abroad. Additionally, he condemned several tragedies, including an attack on two churches in Pakistan; arson and denigrating graffiti at a Greek Orthodox seminary in Jerusalem and a mosque in the West Bank; and the murder of humanist activist Avijit Roy, to name a few. You can see the latest work of Saperstein and his office by following @AmbSaperstein on Twitter.

—Cherilyn Crowe



K. Hollyn Hollman
General Counsel

HollmanREPORT

Utah compromise worth consideration

“It appears many in Utah did the hard work of listening, explaining, writing and compromising, so that different groups could get things they needed.”

Through our publications, blog, and website, the BJC regularly reports on state legislative action affecting religious liberty. Some of the most visible recent bills are state versions of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). The BJC supports strong statutory protections for free exercise rights modeled on the federal RFRA and frequently writes about how these state bills respond to legal and political developments (see BJCOnline.org/RFRA). Debates over the bills vary depending on the specific language of the legislation and the political environment in which they are proposed.

While the BJC continues to track these bills and advocate for ways to protect religious freedom for all, we also learn from these state legislative experiments. Recent developments in one state deserve special notice. While Utah did not pass a state RFRA, it passed two significant bills that have been dubbed the “Utah Compromise,” providing protections for both religious liberty and the LGBT community. Utah’s actions appear to demonstrate that conflicts about the meaning of religious liberty, the scope of religious exemptions and the rights of LGBT persons can be worked through and lead to mutually beneficial results.

In several states that have recently considered or passed religious freedom legislation, debate has focused on how the law will affect LGBT persons and those who have religious objections to LGBT legal protections. Individuals for and against specific measures, including politicians, business leaders and religious liberty advocates, mostly have been talking past each other’s concerns. Honest assessments have been hard to find.

In Utah, the interested parties found a way to work together. The “Utah Compromise” consists of two pieces of legislation referred to by their Senate bill numbers: SB 296 and SB 297.

SB 296 adds “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” as protected classes in Utah’s housing and employment statutes and protects certain employee speech. SB 297 respects religious objections to involvement in same-sex marriage while ensuring that all couples have access to marriage.

Previously, religious groups in Utah were exempt from all anti-discrimination provisions in Utah’s housing and employment statutes and no anti-discrimination protections were in place for

members of the LGBT community. The change in law means that, while religious groups remain exempt from all anti-discrimination provisions, the Utah LGBT community will have the same protections in housing and employment as members of other protected classes, such as race, sex, religion and disability. Additionally, employees are now specifically protected from employer retaliation for expressing “religious or moral beliefs and commitments in the workplace in a reasonable, non-disruptive, and non-harassing way” and “for lawful expression or expressive activity outside of the workplace regarding the person’s religious, political, or personal convictions.”

Historically, Utah law did not impose a duty upon county clerks to perform marriage ceremonies. Therefore, some county clerks solemnized marriages while others did not. After the recent changes in law, each county clerk’s office must develop policies not only to issue marriage licenses but also solemnize all legal marriages. Clerks who object to performing wedding ceremonies must appoint someone in the county to do so. This decision is not on a couple-by-couple basis; clerks will be available to perform any legal marriage ceremony or have an appointed alternate to do so.

For several reasons, including the way Utah’s prior non-discrimination provisions were written, the prominence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah, and the need to heal deep divisions between the LDS Church and the LGBT community from earlier political fights, advocates say the legislation won’t be a model for other states. But, according to Jonathan Rauch, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, which sponsored an excellent program on the issue, it may be a “pathway.” The Brookings program, “Gays, Mormons, and the Constitution: Are there win-win answers for LGBT rights and religious conscience?” was held March 16, and a recording is available on their website.

It appears many in Utah did the hard work of listening, explaining, writing and compromising, so that different groups could get things they needed. If Utah is a pathway for other states, it will be because those who care about statutory protections for religious liberty work diligently and honestly to explain what and why legislation is needed and how others will be affected. That is an example worth following.

Hollman pointed to the inclusion in SB 129 of new language that diverted from the federal RFRA standard, calling for the government's compelling interest to be of the "highest magnitude."

The federal RFRA was the product of years of legal scholars studying the language and working to agree on a standard, she said. RFRA does not dictate outcomes, but it allows claims of sincerely held religious belief that are substantially burdened by the government to have a day in court. The BJC led the coalition of nearly 70 organizations from across the political and religious spectrum that urged Congress to pass RFRA in 1993.

"We at the Baptist Joint Committee oppose state RFRA where states monkey with the language to make sure the religious adherent wins," Hollman said. "We're not ready to throw out the standard of RFRA. We continue to stand by that federal standard and watch closely what courts do."

Hollman also highlighted the public rhetoric surrounding the religious freedom legislation in Georgia, pointing out exaggerated assertions that the Georgia bill would help abusers and the Ku Klux Klan.

"These claims are wild hyperbole and unhelpful to religious freedom conversations in Georgia," Hollman said. "Unfortunately, this is what gets people's attention and this is a starting point, rather than having a helpful conversation."

Hollman emphasized the role of the courts in rejecting frivolous lawsuits.

"You can assert a lot of claims and file a lot of claims, but that doesn't mean you should win or that you should be alarmed. That's what the courts do — they throw out bad claims all the time."

Since the federal RFRA became law in 1993, very few claims have prevailed in the courts, Hollman said, citing recent legal research. She noted that unsuccessful RFRA claims have included religion-based defense to marijuana charges, religion-based defenses to sexual misconduct (including clergy sexual abuse) and religious defenses against paying child support.

"Courts remain skeptical of granting religious exemptions when the exemptions result in harm to third parties," Hollman said.

She thanked the group for their support of religious freedom and encouraged the pastors to continue to be faithful to the foundational Baptist and biblical commitment to an uncoerced faith.

"You are seen [in your communities] as responsible people who not only care about your own religious freedom but religious freedom for everyone," she said during the program.

At press time for *Report from the Capital*, Georgia's SB 129 remained tabled in a House committee, where it first landed March 26. For the latest legislative developments in the states, visit the Baptist Joint Committee's state RFRA tracker at BJCOnline.org/state-rfra-tracker-2015.

— Aaron Weaver, *Cooperative Baptist Fellowship*
with BJC Staff Reports

N.J. to Archdiocese of Newark: Get out of the headstone business

NEWARK, N.J. — The Archdiocese of Newark, the largest single provider of in-ground burials in New Jersey, must give up a lucrative companion business — the marketing of headstones and private crypts — under a bill signed into law March 23 by Gov. Chris Christie.

The measure, which passed both houses of the Legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support, goes into effect in one year, allowing the archdiocese time to wind down without imperiling sales in progress at its Catholic cemeteries.

The archdiocese became the first religious group in the state to enter the headstone business two years ago, alarming dozens of small, independent companies that produce monuments and crypts.

The dealers' trade association, the Monument Builders of New Jersey, waged an 18-month legal fight and lobbying campaign against the move, contending the practice would spread to other dioceses and then to the owners of other religious cemeteries.

The archdiocese returned fire with a lobbying effort of its own, along with a personal appeal from Archbishop John J. Myers, who exhorted Catholics to fight the law.

Once in effect, the measure will bar all religious groups from the market for headstones and family crypts. It also will bar those groups from owning funeral homes and mortuaries, though none currently do.

The law does not impact large, communal mausoleums, which sometimes contain the remains of thousands of people.

John Burns Jr., the president of the trade association, said the law will do nothing less than save his industry from annihilation, contending private firms would not be able to compete on a level playing field with a tax-exempt group like the church. In time, Burns said, the archdiocese would have developed a monopoly.

"Thank God," he said. "If Christie didn't sign this bill, it would have been a short period of time before we were out of business."

In the 18 months since the archdiocese began marketing headstones, Burns said, some his colleagues saw business drop off by 40 percent.

This is the second time the bill has come before Christie. In February, he conditionally vetoed a nearly identical measure, recommending it be rewritten to reflect the year-long waiting period. The earlier version would have taken effect immediately. The Senate and Assembly swiftly re-approved it with the change.

Jim Goodness, a spokesman for the archdiocese, declined to comment. He has previously said church officials were disappointed by the measure's approval in the Legislature. At the same time, he said, they were grateful for the year-long delay.

— Mark Mueller, *The Star-Ledger* (Newark, N.J.)



200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002-5797

Phone: 202.544.4226
Fax: 202.544.2094
Email: bjc@BJCOnline.org
Website: www.BJCOnline.org

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Riverdale, MD
Permit No. 5061

Baptist Joint Committee Supporting Bodies

- Alliance of Baptists
- American Baptist Churches USA
- Baptist General Association of Virginia
- Baptist General Convention of Missouri
- Baptist General Convention of Texas
- Converge Worldwide (BGC)
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina
- National Baptist Convention of America
- National Baptist Convention USA Inc.
- National Missionary Baptist Convention
- North American Baptists Inc.
- Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.
- Religious Liberty Council
- Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

REPORT from the Capital

J. Brent Walker
Executive Director

Cherilyn Crowe
Editor

Jordan Edwards
Associate Editor

Report from the Capital (ISSN-0346-0661) is published 10 times each year by the Baptist Joint Committee. For subscription information, please contact the Baptist Joint Committee.

RLC Luncheon tickets now on sale

Tickets are now on sale for the 2015 Religious Liberty Council Luncheon, to be held Friday, June 19, in Dallas, Texas, in conjunction with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly.

Our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Marvin A. McMickle, president of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and the author of *Pulpit & Politics: Separation of Church & State in the Black Church*.

The luncheon is open to the public, but you must have a ticket to attend. This is a unique event to connect with the BJC and other supporters of religious liberty.

Tickets are \$40 each, and a table of 10 is \$400. If you are a young minister with less than five years experience, you are eligible to purchase a ticket at a 50 percent discount.

Visit BJCOnline.org/luncheon to purchase tickets and learn more details.

If you have any questions about the luncheon, contact Development Director Taryn Deaton at tdeaton@BJCOnline.org.

"The Religious Liberty Council Luncheon is always a highlight of my summer. By sponsoring a table, I not only demonstrate my support for the work of the BJC, but I also have a chance to learn from others who are passionate about defending and extending religious liberty for all."

—Rev. Tambi Swiney, Nashville, Tenn.

"We enjoy attending the luncheon each year because the BJC staff helps us understand current church-state issues, and we get to catch up with friends who share our interest in religious liberty. We wouldn't miss it!"

—Kent and Ann Brown, Gretna, Va.

