

Louisiana Governor Signs LGBT Discrimination Executive Order in Public Employment and Services

April 14, 2016

By [Greg Guidry](#)

On April 13, 2016, Louisiana's new governor, John Bel Edwards, signed an executive order protecting state employees and employees of state contractors from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, political affiliation, disability, or age. The order also prohibits state agencies from discriminating on these bases in the provision of services, but it does recognize an exemption for churches and religious organizations.

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In his press release announcing the new executive order, Governor Edwards noted that there is currently no state law protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) Louisianans from employment discrimination, though the cities of New Orleans and Shreveport have passed ordinances doing so. The executive order nullifies an executive order that former governor Bobby Jindal signed in 2015, which did not provide protection on the basis of LGBT status.

Governor Edwards stated that while this executive order "respects the religious beliefs of our people, it also signals to the rest of the country that discrimination is not a Louisiana value, but rather, that Louisiana is a state that is respectful and inclusive of everyone around us."

The order is effective immediately, except for the section dealing with state contracts, which will go into effect on July 1, 2016.

Though the new executive order does not affect private-sector employers that don't have contracts with the State of Louisiana, it should be noted that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission takes the position that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does provide protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation—and has recently filed two lawsuits taking that position to court.

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