

# White House Says No Religious Exemptions Will Be Included In Administration's New Anti-Discrimination Order

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Federal contractors will not be able to discriminate against LGBT people in hiring even if they have a religious objection, the Obama Administration will announce on Monday.

Last month, the administration announced it would amend two executive orders barring employers who rely on federal funds from discriminating against a series of traits. The current order includes race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Now, it will also include gender identity and sexual orientation. The move is a Band-Aid solution to the broader problem of

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their sexuality.

When the announcement came last month, though, there remained an open question as to whether religious objectors would be exempt. About 140 religious leaders requested broad exemptions, while more than 100 members of clergy specifically asked Obama not to include such an exemption. On Friday, Politico reported that the administration will not heed the former requests, and will instead make the rule apply more broadly to all federal contractors.

“This is a tremendous victory for those of us who believe that as people of faith we should be exemplary, not exempted,” said Rev. Fred Davie, Executive Vice President at Union Theological Seminary. Rev. Davie will be a guest when the President signs the executive order on Monday.

“Religions of the world across the ages have engendered and supported discrimination and bigotry from deceptively genteel to utterly horrific. We have also sacrificed our very lives for our neighbors in response to God’s radical and unrelenting call to love others as much as we love ourselves,” he added.

While it may seem like a small technicality to make a new anti-discrimination rule exclusively for government contractors, the order will actually effect over a million LGBT workers in the United States, and will be the largest expansion of LGBT workers’ rights in the nation’s history. In 29 states, it is legal to fire someone for being gay. In 34, an employer can fire someone with no recourse if they are transgender.

The executive order will keep in place an exemption established by President George W. Bush in 2002 that allows religious contractors to favor employees with the same religion for religious roles.

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