



Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder signs controversial religious objection adoption bills

rick-snyder-office-michigan.jpeg

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder in his Lansing office. (AP File Photo | Carlos Osorio)

Jonathan Oosting | joosting@mlive.com By **Jonathan Oosting | joosting@mlive.com**

Follow on Twitter

on June 11, 2015 at 1:16 PM, updated June 11, 2015 at 1:36 PM

LANSING, MI — Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder on Thursday quickly signed controversial legislation allowing adoption agencies to decline service to prospective parents on religious grounds.

The three-bill package, widely opposed by LGBT advocates, had reached his desk less than 24 hours earlier after approval Wednesday in the Republican-led Legislature.

The new law, which largely codifies an existing Department of Human Services policy, takes effect immediately -- just weeks before the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule on Michigan's gay marriage ban.

"The state has made significant progress in finding more forever homes for Michigan kids in recent years and that wouldn't be possible without the public-private partnerships that facilitate the adoption process," Snyder said in a statement.

"We are focused on ensuring that as many children are adopted to as many loving families as possible regardless of their makeup."

The new law seeks to prohibit "adverse action" against a private agency that contracts with the state to provide adoption services, including an attempt to strip state funding.

If an agency rejects a prospective parent on religious grounds, they would have to refer them to another agency and provide them with a written list of options.

Snyder's office, in announcing the signing, provided MLive with letters from the Michigan Catholic Conference and Bethany Christian Services urging his support.

Bethany had suggested that future policies may force faith-based agencies to "choose between their desire

to help children and families and their fidelity to their religious principles."

Religiously affiliated agencies in some other states, including Illinois, have reportedly closed their doors rather than comply with new regulations there requiring them to work with same-sex couples.

Critics, comparing the proposal to an Indiana religious freedom law that prompted national criticism earlier this year, had urged Snyder to veto the legislation, arguing that it would amount to state-sanctioned discrimination against gays and lesbians wishing to adopt.

"Children deserve loving homes and our elected officials should be held accountable for supporting this blatant act of discrimination," Lonnie Scott, executive director of Progress Michigan, said in a statement.

"We hope that Gov. Snyder is prepared for the same amount of backlash that was seen in Indiana when they passed similar RFRA-style legislation and we encourage the people to raise up their voices in protest."

This story will be updated.

© 2015 MLive.com. All rights reserved.