FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) today opposes the anti-LGBTQ bias in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act passed by the Indiana State Legislature last week. While Indiana Governor Mike Pence enacted “fixes” to the law, NCAPA believes these measures are not sufficient in prohibiting discrimination in the name of religious liberty.

“While RFRA laws are vital, especially in protecting the religious expression of minority faith communities, NCAPA strongly opposes legislation that purports to protect religious freedom but in fact sanctions discrimination against the LGBT community,” said Gregory Cendana, the first openly gay Chair of NCAPA and Executive Director of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. “The fixes that were made in Indiana and Arkansas’ laws do not adequately protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals from discriminatory practices. NCAPA recognizes the importance of RFRA laws for many religious minorities, especially within Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and we are willing to work with lawmakers in Indiana, Arkansas, and across the nation to craft more responsible RFRA legislation.”

“The National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) is undeterred and stands firmly against Indiana’s new Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). We still fear that the law could allow employers, landlords, and business owners to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Asian Americans, South Asians, Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders on religious grounds,” said Glenn D. Magpantay, NQAPIA Executive Director. "As long as they don't ask, victims can't tell. It’s still discrimination.” NQAPIA is a member organization of NCAPA.

On March 26, Indiana lawmakers passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a law that uses the guise of religious freedom to allow business owners to refuse goods and services to customers who they perceive as LGBT. Passage of the law sparked national debate, and resulted in many businesses and organizations rejecting the measure as regressive and discriminatory. On Thursday, Indiana lawmakers passed new legislation in an attempt to clarify that the RFRA cannot be used to support anti-LGBT discrimination.

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson refused to sign a similar RFRA bill on Wednesday, which also included provisions that would potentially permit businesses to deny service to LGBT customers. On April 2, he signed into law a bill that is similar in nature to the 1993-passed federal RFRA law, which does not address discrimination at all.

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The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), founded in 1996, is a coalition of 34 national Asian Pacific American organizations. Based in Washington D.C., NCAPA serves to represent the interests of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AA & NHPI) communities and to provide a national voice on policy issues and priorities.