

Kansas Will Allow On-Campus Church Groups to Deny Members

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On Tuesday, Governor Sam Brownback signed a bill allowing on-campus faith-based groups to restrict membership. Photo courtesy of U.S. News. [/caption]

Summary: On Tuesday, a Kansas bill was signed allowing publicly-funded on-campus groups to express their religious freedoms.

Already conservative Kansas is getting redder. On Tuesday, Republican governor Sam Brownback signed legislation allowing religious groups on college campuses to restrict membership to only those with similar views. [U.S. News](#) reported the story and wrote that the action is likely to face push back from civil liberties groups.

Kansas already has laws in place that prevent the government from limiting people's freedom to express their religion, but the law does not extend to universities, especially publicly funded ones. Now Kansas is the second state after Oklahoma to have such a university-specific law in place.

The Kansas Legislature is currently dominated by the Republican party that pushed the bill. Supporters of the legislation cite it as a victory for the freedom to exercise religious beliefs, and critics say it's an attempt to legalize discrimination. Brownback said this new, targeted bill will serve the betterment of college campuses.

The new law will take effect July 1, and it will block public colleges and universities from denying religious groups money if they limit their membership. Critics say that the new law is unfair for minority groups to have to pay for campus groups that would deny them entry. They said the new law would allow discrimination based on sexual orientation, race, and gender.

The ACLU of Kansas has already said it is "seriously" considering a legal battle against the law. Micah Kubic, executive director of the group, said the law is a "step backward." Other opponents said this discriminatory law could put Kansas schools at risk of losing federal money, but Brownback assured that this would not happen.

The law originated from a few on-campus incidents in Kansas and other states where religious groups denied members certain rights because of their alternative beliefs. For instance, at Washburn University in Topeka, KS, a Christian group denied a Mormon from leading a Bible studies group, and asked the member to recognize the Bible, not the Book of Mormon. The Christian group filed a lawsuit after Washburn University told them they couldn't do this, but it looks like the GOP-led legislature disagreed.

Source: [U.S. News and World Report](#)