

July 26, 2018

To California Christian Leaders,

My name is Dan Carroll and I am the Senior Pastor of Water of Life Community Church in Fontana, California. Water of Life is an outreach-oriented church with a focus on overseas and urban ministries. My wife Gale and I planted Water of Life 28 years ago with 27 people. Today we have a weekly attendance of 7,000 to 8,000.

Like many of you, I do not have a history of political involvement. My passion is ministry, not politics. But year after year, I have watched the state legislature pass bill after bill that negatively impacted our community and our youth. When AB 2943 was introduced, I knew I could no longer passively remain on the sidelines.

Water of Life seeks to bring hope, healing and transformation to individuals through the power of the Gospel, including those who struggle with same sex attraction and gender confusion. Through AB 2943, Legislators are seeking to declare all fee-based resources offered to these individuals as consumer fraud. This means our counseling centers can no longer minister to these individuals and employees in our bookstores could face liability for guiding a person to books or other resources that address same sex attraction from a Biblical perspective. This is a direct threat to the religious freedom of Christian counselors, ministries, and churches. And it is also a direct threat to the freedom of individuals facing unwanted attractions or identity confusion to find help from a licensed counselor or support group. I could not sit silently by and watch this bill pass.

So when AB 2943 began to move through our legislature, I asked our church to contact their state legislators to ask them to oppose this bill. This was the first time in 28 years I had ever spoken publicly about politics. Surprisingly, soon after making my appeal, I received a call from our local Assemblywoman Eloise Reyes asking me to meet with her to discuss AB 2943. I later found out she called because she received 3,000 phone calls and emails from Water of Life people opposing this bill.

After an hour plus conversation in Assemblywoman Reyes' office, I was invited by her to go to Sacramento to meet with Assemblyman Evan Low, the author of AB 2943, to discuss our strong concerns with the bill.

Frankly, I was shocked at both Assembly members' willingness to thoughtfully sit and discuss this bill. Low even agreed to delay the bill, until there were further discussions with the opposition. The whole experience has been way out of my comfort zone, but it has shown me that if we get involved, and walk this out thoughtfully and kindly, we can make a huge difference in our state and help stop legislation that undermines our ability to share the Gospel.

Why am I writing you this letter? Legislators are returning to the Capitol from summer recess on August 6 to vote on this bill. Obviously, I believe I have made a mistake by not speaking up sooner. My church, like yours, has a voice in our community and your state representatives need to hear from you and your congregation. The time to sit by and hope someone else is going to speak up is over. I am writing this letter to encourage you to get involved, while we still have a voice in the State of California.

Sincerely,

Senior Pastor Dan Carroll