

## Religious Freedom Laws, Now Divisive

NEW YORK (AP) — Religious freedom laws like the one causing an uproar in Indiana have never been successfully used to defend discrimination against gays — and have rarely been used at all, legal experts say.

However, past may not be prologue in these cases, since gays have only recently won widespread legalization of same-sex marriage, and religious conservatives are now scrambling for new legal strategies to blunt the trend.

“There’s an inability to look to the past as a reliable predictor of the future on this,” said Robert Tuttle, a church-state expert at George Washington University School of Law. “If what you’re saying is that it can be certain it won’t be used — you can’t know that because this is now a different situation.”

Last week, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed the state Religious Freedom Restoration Act, giving heightened protections to businesses and individuals who object on religious grounds to providing certain services. The law triggered a swift and intense backlash from gay rights supporters, businesses such as Apple, and some states, which barred government-funded travel to Indiana.

Critics of the law say the intent is to discriminate against gays. They fear, for example, that caterers, florists, photographers and bakers with religious objections to same-sex marriage will be allowed to refuse to do business with gay couples. Supporters of the law say it will only give religious objectors a chance to bring their case before a judge.

## Nigeria’s President Concedes Defeat

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Amid anger over an Islamic insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives, Nigerians threw out the incumbent and elected a 72-year-old former military dictator Tuesday in a historic transfer of power following the nation’s most hotly contested election ever.

President Goodluck Jonathan conceded defeat to former Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, paving the way for an unprecedented peaceful transfer of power in Africa’s most populous nation.

“Nobody’s ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian,” Jonathan said in a statement in which he congratulated his successor on his victory. “I promised the country free and fair elections. I have kept my word.”

It will be the first time in Nigeria’s history that an opposition party has democratically taken control of the country from the ruling party — considered a sign of the West African nation’s maturing young democracy. Jonathan’s party has governed since decades of military dictatorship ended in 1999.

Celebrations erupted throughout Buhari’s strongholds in northern Nigeria and around his campaign headquarters in Abuja. Cars honked and people waved brooms in the air — a symbol of Buhari’s campaign promise to sweep out Nigeria’s endemic corruption.

## Co-Pilot Said He Had Depression Episode

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Lufthansa knew that the co-pilot of the passenger plane that crashed in the French Alps last week had suffered from an episode of “severe depression” before he finished his flight training with the German airline.

The airline said Tuesday that it has found emails that Andreas Lubitz sent to the Lufthansa flight school in 2009 when he resumed his training in Bremen after an interruption of several months.

In them, he informed the school that he had suffered a “previous episode of severe depression,” which had since subsided.

The airline said Lubitz subsequently passed all medical checks and that it has provided the documents to prosecutors. It declined to make any further comment.

French authorities say voice recordings indicate Lubitz, 27, locked the other pilot out of the cockpit and deliberately crashed the Airbus A320 in the French Alps on March 24. All 150 people aboard Flight 9525 from Barcelona to Duesseldorf died.

## NJ Lottery Missing Financial Targets

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Chris Christie privatized the management of New Jersey’s lottery two years ago, he said its new overseers would “modernize and maximize” the games.

Instead, a lottery once ranked among the nation’s top performers is now lagging for the second straight year, trailing its state income targets by \$64 million seven months into the current fiscal year. Meanwhile, the company running it has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to hire lobbyists and a public relations firm with close ties to the governor.

New Jersey lawmakers anticipated receiving nearly \$1.04 billion in income from the lottery this year, a number reduced to just \$955 million in a revised budget released this month. Having collected an estimated \$510 million seven months into this fiscal year, the lottery is not on track to meet even its lowered expectations.

The shortfalls could mean budget cuts to programs directly funded by the lottery system — such as after-school care, programs for veterans and education for the deaf — should the lottery’s fortunes not improve.

The lottery’s woes are one piece of New Jersey’s fiscal troubles, which include transportation funding shortfalls and underfunded state pensions. At a state assembly budget hearing earlier this week, state Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff blamed the lottery’s underperformance on industry-wide trends and a shortage of big jackpots in multi-state games such as Powerball to drive sales.

## College Graduates Go On ‘Debt Strike’

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pamela Hunt is so overwhelmed by her \$56,000 in student loans for what she considers a worthless criminal justice master’s degree that she’s joined others on a “debt strike” and refusing to pay back the money.

On Tuesday, she walked out of a meeting with officials from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Education Department she and other former students from for-profit colleges attended on behalf of the “Corinthian 100” feeling cautiously optimistic about the burden being eased.

“I think it can go either way,” said Hunt, 55, who works in home health care in Ledyard, Connecticut. She obtained her degree online through Everest College.

The group’s name comes from troubled Corinthian Colleges, Inc., which operated Everest College, Heald College and WyoTech before agreeing last summer to sell or close its 100-plus campuses. About 100 current and former students are refusing to pay back their loans, according to the Debt Collective group behind the strike. The former students argue that the department should have done a better job regulating the schools and informing students that they were under investigation.

“I know they heard us but I don’t know if they actually understand the significance of what a lot of us are going through,” said Hunt, describing former students unable to take out car loans and on the verge of going homeless.

## Cuba Delegate Reports ‘Civilized’ Talks

HAVANA (AP) — Cuban and U.S. delegations on Tuesday ended a preparatory meeting for holding future negotiations on human rights without setting a date, agenda or host for those talks.

The head of the Cuban delegation at the session in Washington, Foreign Ministry official Pedro Luis Pedrosa, said at a news conference that the lack of details did not mean the negotiations would not be held. He said a decision on holding the talks would be reached during traditional diplomatic channels.

A U.S. government statement said only that both sides expressed a willingness to address a variety of topics at future talks.

# A Look At Widely Criticized Indiana Law On Religious Freedom

BY JENI O’MALLEY  
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Gov. Mike Pence urged lawmakers Tuesday to send a bill to his desk by the end of the week to clarify the intent of a new law that critics fear could permit discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Pence’s move to quell a backlash over the law comes as Arkansas lawmakers defied criticism to pass similar legislation. A look at the latest developments:

### WHAT THE LAW SAYS

The Indiana law, which takes effect July 1, does not specifically mention gays and lesbians, but opponents say it is designed to protect businesses and individuals who do not want to serve gays and lesbians, such as florists or caterers who might be hired for a same-sex wedding.

The law prohibits state laws that “substantially burden” a person’s ability to follow his or her religious beliefs unless the government can show that it has a compelling interest and that the action is the least restrictive means of achieving it. The definition of “person” includes religious institutions, businesses and associations.

Critics say that language is broader than a 1993 federal law signed by then-President Bill Clinton that Pence says it’s based on.

Twenty states now have similar laws in place.

Indiana University law professor Deborah Widiss says such laws across the country have not “been a sort of blank check to discriminate.”

Widiss says the proposals are fueled by rulings legalizing gay marriage and by

last year’s Supreme Court interpretation of the federal law in a case involving retailer Hobby Lobby. The court ruled the retailer and other closely held private businesses with religious objections could opt out of providing the free contraceptive coverage required by President Barack Obama’s health care law, the Affordable Care Act.

### CHANGES COMING

Pence said Tuesday he stands by the law but acknowledged that Indiana has a “perception problem.” He said he has been meeting with lawmakers and business leaders “around the clock” to address concerns that the Indiana bill would allow discrimination against gays and lesbians.

The governor called for legislation addressing those issues by the end of the week, and Republican leaders said they were working on language.

Arkansas lawmakers said they would not modify their state’s measure despite opponents’ calls to do so.

### REACTIONS POUR IN

NASCAR issued a statement Tuesday saying it was “disappointed” by the legislation, becoming the latest organization or business to speak out against it. The NCAA, which has had its headquarters in Indianapolis since 1999, says it is concerned about the law’s effect on future Indiana events.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Tuesday announced a ban on non-essential state-funded travel to Indiana because of the law. Connecticut made a similar move a day earlier.

Many Indiana businesses are trying to counter the negative attention by posting signs or stickers saying they serve everyone. But the

state has already lost a union conference planned for October worth an estimated \$500,000, and other businesses say they are curbing travel to the state.

### POLITICIANS WEIGH IN

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and other potential 2016 Republican presidential candidates have jumped to the defense of Pence and Indiana’s law. Bush said the law was “simply allowing people of faith space to be able to express their beliefs” and compared the measure to one in Florida.

Several high-profile Democrats, including possible presidential contenders Hillary Rodham Clinton and former Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley, have been critical of the measure. O’Malley said it’s “shameful” for Republicans to support the law.

While Pence insisted that he abhors discrimination, Democratic Gov. Daniel Malloy of Connecticut called him a “bigot” during an appearance on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” Tuesday. Malloy cited a photograph showing Pence signing the bill with several gay-rights opponents in attendance, including one who had likened being gay to bestiality.

“That’s who he invited to the signing ceremony. He knew exactly what he was doing. And when you see a bigot, you have to call him on it,” Malloy said.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the Indiana law is “a much more open-ended piece of legislation” than the 1993 federal law and “flies in the face of the kinds of values that people all across the country strongly support.”

## Nigeria’s President-Elect Muhammadu Buhari Known As Strict

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Nigeria’s next president, the first opposition candidate to unseat a democratically elected president in the country’s history, also knows how to take power through other means.

On Dec. 31, 1983, the military mounted a coup and Muhammadu Buhari, then a major general, became the country’s leader.

Now 72, Buhari says he has undergone radical changes since those days and that he now champions democracy. After the coup, he ran an authoritarian regime until fellow soldiers ousted him less than 20 months later, placed him under house arrest and handed power to another major general.

Buhari’s regime had executed drug dealers, returned

looted state assets and sent soldiers to the streets with whips to enforce traffic laws. With oil prices slumping and Nigerians saying foreigners deprived them of work, Buhari’s regime ordered an estimated 700,000 illegal immigrants to leave the country. Government workers arriving late to their offices were forced to perform squats.

## OBITUARIES

### Harold ‘Les’ Korff

Harold “Les” Korff, age 97 of Hartington, Nebraska, died on Friday, March 27, 2015 at the Golden Living Center in Hartington.

Mass of Christian Burial will be on Monday, April 6, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Hartington with Rev. Jim Keiter officiating. Burial will be in the St. Michael’s Cemetery in Hartington with military rites by the Hartington VFW Post #5283.

Visitation will be on Sunday, April 5, 2015 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a Vigil Service at 7:00 p.m. at the Wintz Funeral Home in Hartington. Visitation will begin one hour prior to services on Monday at the church. To send an online message to the family, please visit www.wintzray-funeralhome.com.

Pallbearers will be Robert Griggs, TJ Griggs, Daniel Roche, Travis Haaland, Margaret Griggs and Sophie Griggs.

Les was born on September 15, 1917 in Hartington, Nebraska to Herman A. and Eva (Neuhalfen) Korff. He grew up in the Hartington area and graduated from



Korff

District 79 Elementary School northwest of Pleasant Valley, Les moved to San Diego in 1939

where he worked as a machinist at Consolidated Aircraft until joining the U.S. Army from 1946-1947. He moved back to Hartington in 1948 where he started a custom farming business with his brother, Walt. Les married Margaret Schmidt Griggs in 1966. Marge and Les owned and operated the Coast to Coast Hardware store for 25 years until their retirement in 1991.

During their early retirement years, Marge and Les enjoyed traveling, visiting family, playing cards and dancing. Les enjoyed staying busy, and continued working on small engines and doing other minor repairs in his home shop throughout his retirement. He was a lifelong avid baseball fan and listened to big band music. Les was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church and was a lifetime member of the

## No Agreement Yet: Iran Nuke Talks Push Past Deadline

BY MATTHEW LEE  
AND GEORGE JAHN  
Associated Press

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — With stubborn disputes unresolved, nuclear talks between Iran and six world powers went past a self-imposed deadline and into overtime as negotiators renewed efforts to hammer out the outline of an agreement.

Enough progress had been made to warrant the extension past midnight Tuesday, State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said, although there still were “several difficult issues” to bridge.

Secretary of State John Kerry, who had planned to leave the talks Tuesday, was remaining. And an Iranian negotiator said his team could stay “as long as necessary” to clear the remaining hurdles.

The decision came after six days of marathon efforts to reach a preliminary understanding by midnight Tuesday, drawing in foreign ministers from all seven nations at the table — Iran, the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany.

After more than a decade of diplomatic efforts to limit Tehran’s nuclear advances, the present talks already had been extended twice, demonstrating the difficulties of reaching an agreement that meets the demands of both sides.

The U.S. and its negotiating partners demand curbs on Iranian nuclear activities that could be used to make weapons, and they say any agreement must extend the time Tehran would need to produce a weapon from the present several months to at least a year. The Iranians deny such military intentions, but they are negotiating with the aim that a deal will end sanctions on their economy.

In a sign of the confusion surrounding the end of the talks, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claimed there was agreement on all sides. That statement was quickly contradicted by a Western diplomat.

## American Legion.

Les is survived by six stepchildren, Tom (Linda) Griggs of Hurst, TX; Winnie Dietsch of Shaker Heights, OH; Sue (Richard) Roche of Ft. Worth, TX; Mary Jo Griggs of Ft. Collins, CO; Fred (Trish) Griggs of Windor, CO; Sheila Griggs of Ft. Collins, CO; 14 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren; one brother, Raymond (Barb) Korff of LeMars, IA; 3 sisters, Joan Olsen of Coleridge, NE, Beulah (George) Elstead of White River, NY; Irene Foulk of Hartington, NE.

Les was preceded in death by his parents; wife Marge on March 9, 2005 at the age of 79; brother, Walter Korff; sisters, Helen Bell, Edna Auch and Erma Korff.

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