

**Script for Indiana House Judiciary Committee Hearing**  
Final Version presented by Bill Katip in oral testimony  
March 16, 2015

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Dr. Bill Katip, and I am the president of Grace College and Seminary, which was founded in 1937. The religious tradition our institution follows dates back to the very early 1700s in Germany.

Our campus is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association (Chicago). We are also professionally accredited by several other (professional) accrediting bodies.

Our institutional enrollment during our most recently completed semester was just under 2,200 students who were scattered across about 60 undergraduate and 20 graduate programs taught both in our home state of Indiana and beyond.

The campus is active in education: (1) that helps community businesses and global corporations; (2) that serves the community through the institution's Center for Lakes and Streams and its environmental research and outreach, including elementary and secondary school environmental programs; and (3) that prepares ministry leaders for multiple denominations.

**A brief background sketch will provide context for my comments at this hearing.**

The mission of Grace College and Seminary, unchanged since its founding, states that we are a "Christian community of higher education

which applies biblical values in strengthening character, sharpening competence, and preparing for service.”

This mission includes our understanding that the historic Christian faith we embrace is to be lived out in *all of life*. The practice of the Christian faith is not simply to be restricted within the four walls of a place of worship or religious activities to be done only inside one’s residence. Given this brief background, the institution values deeply the opportunity to live and work and educate in an environment that allows and respects religious freedom and provides the opportunity to practice Christianity. We do not take this opportunity lightly. Therefore we value this opportunity to comment to you today.

**Within the United States there are current patterns related to the practice of Religious Freedom that deeply concerns us. Here is a very personal example for us at Grace College and Seminary.**

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has had impact on our campus. The Act did include a religious exemption opportunity for those objecting to the government requiring coverage of certain drugs. But the extreme narrowness of the religious exemption requirements was troubling. In spite of our mission and its practice, our institutional history, our training of ministry leadership for the church, we did not qualify for the Health and Human Services exemption. And though our religious heritage dates back decades before the establishment of the Constitution of the United States, we were informed by Health and Human Services in 2010 that we were not religious enough to qualify for exemption.

The Healthcare Act and its requirements encroached on our religious freedom and added pressure, distraction, and cost to our campus. Should the Act and its implementation so encroach and demand and threaten with fines? We are very concerned that continued

government growth and intrusion may increase additional challenges to the practice of religious freedom. Our campus strongly requests the State of Indiana protect our religious freedom.

I recently came across an article that appeared in the February 2015 edition of Freedom (published by the Church of Scientology International)...certainly not a right winged religious publication! (From Freedom, Feb. 2015, Vol. 47, Issue 1)

The article was entitled “What would a day without Religion look like?” The article suggests that it’s instructive to ponder what it might look like were there to be a day without religion in the United States—if a temporary blip in the universe suddenly resulted in religion somehow not existing for a 24-hour period.

Would it even be all that noticeable? The answer is YES, it would absolutely be noticed! After reflecting a bit on this article, I concluded that some of its content might help with my testimony this morning.

Here are some of the ways that being suddenly religion-less for a single day would matter in our lives:

We would experience a serious economic impact: Some 19 percent of higher education institutions in the United States bear a religious [affiliation]...Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and so on—including such schools as Boston College, DePauw University, Southern Methodist University and the University of Notre Dame. Were faith itself to disappear for even a single day, the results could be economically catastrophic.

These campuses enroll more than 2 million students, employ upward of 600,000 faculty and staff and have operating budgets of more than \$35 billion. Translated, even 24 hours without religious colleges

and universities would have a staggering impact on America's bottom line.

We could encounter diminished hospital access: Some 20 percent of hospital beds in America are found at medical facilities with a religious affiliation. That would be a lot of people beset by illness lacking any means of finding acute care.

We could exercise considerably less compassion: All of the faith-based charities that raise money for the homeless, for famine relief, for families on the brink, for children at risk, and so many other humanitarian and philanthropic works would grind to a halt for 24 very difficult hours should religion disappear. That would mean no help whatsoever for many people in need and vast holes in the social safety net.

We could find millions of people going hungry: Some 64 percent of agencies providing food aid to individuals and families are faith-based or housed in a religious organization. Without religion, that sustenance might well not get distributed at all for an entire day.

I am not suggesting that all religion in Indiana will go away if this Act is not passed. I am suggesting, however, that as a pluralistic society, we need the freedom to practice our religion according to our own traditions.

And, I am suggesting that there could be serious economic and personal impact if this freedom was to be compromised and/or eroded. Just look at many European countries if you want examples of societies without religion...and, don't forget the tax codes when looking at these countries!

Our campus mission calls our institution to love others. And the New Testament story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) calls our campus and others to love all people including those with whom we do not agree on any number of issues. The New Testament reports the following.

“(25) On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life? What is written in the Law?’ he (i.e., Jesus) replied. ‘How do you read it?’ He (i.e., the expert in the law) answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and will all your mind;’ and ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ (28) ‘You have answered correctly,’ Jesus replied. ‘Do this and you will live.’ (29) But he (i.e. the expert in the law) wanted to justify himself so he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’

*Then the story of the good Samaritan unfolds...* There is a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho who was robbed and beaten and left half dead... a priest passed by and avoided the man... ...a Levite passed by and avoided the man... ...but a Samaritan passed by and took pity on the man (Samaritans and Jews had strong disagreements between them...they did not have to agree with each other for this help to occur).

...The Samaritan bandaged the man’s wound, took him to an inn and took care of him... paid the innkeeper and paid the bill... *That is how one loves his neighbor! ...A neighbor with whom we have differing opinions and beliefs!!*

Prolonged and deepening animosity is corrosive and destructive. This is not what Grace College and Seminary is all about. This is not what we mean by religious freedom. This bill does not go in that direction.

I urge approval of this worthwhile bill to secure religious freedom in Indiana for the sake of religious institutions like ours whose very mission is threatened when religious freedom is eroded through legislative decisions.

Indeed, Grace College and Seminary would not exist without our religious heritage and mission. Families would not pay the higher price for our faith-based education were it not for our mission. It would add considerable cost to the State of Indiana if we were not here!

Thank you for the important work you do on behalf of Indiana citizens.