Mounting legislation, litigation, and policy create more and more ways in which religion can be used as an excuse not to follow the law.

**Laws Allowing Religious Exemptions in Health Care**

Broad religious exemptions in health care allow health care providers to refuse to provide comprehensive women’s and reproductive health care, including birth control or abortion care in some states. In 2018, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the creation of an office and a proposed rule that would open the door to widespread discrimination in health care. This rule would allow doctors, nurses, insurance plans, hospitals—and nearly any other employee in health care settings that receive any federal funds—to use their religious or moral beliefs to determine the essential care a patient receives.

**Laws Allowing Government Officials to Refuse to Certify Marriages**

Kentucky and North Carolina passed laws that remove county clerks’ names from marriage licenses or allow clerks to opt-out of performing marriages.

**Law Allowing Businesses to Discriminate Against Customers**

Mississippi passed legislation creating a license-to-discriminate that allows business owners to refuse to serve customers if the owner has a religious objection to that customer.

**Federal Guidance Gives Exemptions for Federal Agencies, Employees, Contractors, and Grantees**

U.S. Department of Justice guidance heavily favors religious exemptions in the functioning of the federal government, including for agencies as employers, agencies tasked with drafting regulation, enforcement actions, and in grant making and the awarding of contracts.

**Proposal to Permit Widespread Discrimination Based on Narrow Viewpoints**

First introduced in Congress in 2015, the First Amendment Defense Act would permit people, companies, non-profits, and government agencies to discriminate against their employees and customers based on a single religious viewpoint.

**Masterpiece Cakeshop Case**

The U.S. Supreme Court is considering a case that could create license-to-discriminate for businesses by allowing them to violate federal and state nondiscrimination laws.

**Proposal to Allow Churches to Lobby**

Repealing the Johnson Amendment would allow tax-exempt churches and nonprofits to use tax-free money to support candidates or to lobby, which they are currently unable to do.

**Laws Creating Religious Exemptions in Adoption and Foster Care Services**

Seven states allow child welfare organizations that are tax-payer funded and state-supported to refuse to provide services if doing so would conflict with their moral or religious beliefs.

**Supreme Court and Agencies Extend Exemptions to Employers**

The U.S. Supreme Court extended religious exemptions, that had previously only been available to religious entities, to companies. In Hobby Lobby, the Court found that private, for-profit “closely held” companies can be exempt from federal laws for “religious purposes.” And in Advocate Healthcare Network, the Court ruled that a hospital associated with a church qualifies for exemptions to federal law available to churches.

In October 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced a sweeping religious exemption allowing any employer or university to refuse contraceptive coverage in their health benefits.

**Federal Government Exemptions to the Law**

The movement advancement project (MAP) was founded in 2004 to transform the political landscape by building a broad-based movement to defend and expand the rights of LGBT people. MAP’s mission is to build a political and social movement to achieve a future that is fair and equal for all, without prejudice or discrimination.

MAP works with partners in the movement to lead campaigns that expand LGBT rights and advance policies through litigation, electoral and communications strategy, policy analysis, and mobilization. MAP believes that a movement that is diverse and inclusive of all LGBT people is the most effective in creating positive change, and our work is anchored by our commitment to racial, economic, and gender justice.

MAP’s key success factors include:

1. **Building Broad-Based Movement Support**: MAP works with partners to harness grassroots support and build an inclusive movement that fights for the rights of all LGBT people.
2. **Litigation and Policy Analysis**: MAP’s team of experts develops legal strategies and policy solutions to advance victories in the courts and the halls of government.
3. **Mobilization and Political Engagement**: MAP organizes and mobilizes volunteers, activists, and donors to support our campaigns and efforts.
4. **Media and Communications Strategy**: MAP uses effective media and communications strategies to amplify our work, frame issues, and shape public perception.

MAP recognizes the impact of racism and economic inequality on the LGBT community and works to address these issues as part of our broader efforts to create an inclusive society.