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**Americans.**

**Legislative Brief:**  
***Aderholt Amendment***  
***to the House Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill***  
**115th Congress**

**POSITION:** The Secular Coalition for America strongly opposes the Aderholt Amendment.

**What does the Aderholt Amendment do?**

The Aderholt Amendment would allow publically funded adoption agencies to discriminate against and reject qualified parents if the agency feels the parent does not live up to the agency's religious standards. The amendment ensures that agencies that discriminate cannot lose their funding as a result of doing so. Worse still, the amendment goes one step farther by punishing any state or local government that does hold agencies accountable for their discriminatory practices by withholding 15 percent of federal funding for their child welfare services<sup>1</sup>.

**What is the current status of the bill?**

[Rep. Aderholt](#) (R-AL) introduced his amendment at the Appropriations Committee markup of the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill. The Committee vote was 29 Republicans and no Democrats voted for the amendment and 1 Republican (Rep. Scott Taylor - VA) and 22 Democrats voted against it. The amendment was placed in the broader Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill which passed the Appropriations Committee by a voice vote. The Labor, Health and Human Services bill is awaiting amendments and passage by the House.

The Senate version of the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill does not include any poison-pill riders such as the Aderholt Amendment. Bipartisan Senate appropriators have agreed not to allow poison-pill riders. Senators plan to hold firm on this principal during conference committees when the House and Senate will work out the differences between their two bills.

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<sup>1</sup>Text: [AMENDMENT TO LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2019 OFFERED BY MR. ADERHOLT OF ALABAMA](#)

## **How does the Aderholt Amendment impact Secular Americans?**

The Aderholt Amendment would allow publically funded adoption agencies to discriminate against LGBTQ parents; multiethnic parents; unmarried heterosexual couples; single parents; parents who do not have the same religion as the adoption agency, including nontheists; parents who are deemed insufficiently devout or anyone else for any arbitrary reason that can be included under the umbrella of religion by the adoption agency or staff member.

More than [437,000 children were in foster care in 2016](#), and on average, a child waits nearly two years for placement, according to the HHS Administration for Children and Family<sup>2</sup>. The Aderholt Amendment turns religion into a cruel roadblock between these children and their new parents.

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