



For immediate release  
February 8, 2018

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## The Next North Carolina? Statement on SB 634/AB 748 – Bad for Business Bills

MILWAUKEE — Jason Rae, President & CEO of the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce, released this statement today on SB 634 and AB 748, two bills being discussed in the State Legislature, that would prohibit local municipalities from passing laws that would protect members of the LGBT community from discrimination.

“These awful bills that are getting pushed are bad for Wisconsin and they are bad for business. We stand to lose as a state if they are advanced any further.

“While ten states have considered this type of legislation, only three have passed a preemption like this. Passing this legislation would make Wisconsin one of the more hostile states in the nation to LGBTQ people.

“Senate Bill 634 and Assembly Bill 748 are just like North Carolina’s HB 2, the infamous anti-LGBT law, that cost that state dearly. Specifically, that law prevented municipalities in North Carolina from enacting anti-discrimination policies. That’s part of the bill that’s being discussed right now in the Legislature.

“We all remember the headlines from North Carolina, things like, [‘Transgender Law Makes North Carolina Pioneer in Bigotry’](#), [‘North Carolina’s rush to bigotry’](#), [‘North Carolina’s newest law solidifies state’s role in defining discrimination’](#) and more. Those are headlines we will see about Wisconsin if these bills are passed.

“What is even worse than the headlines though is the economic ramifications Wisconsin will feel. It cost North Carolina an estimated \$600 million in lost revenue from businesses boycotting the state, cancelled conventions, and national sports events relocating to more LGBTQ-friendly municipalities

“They had the NCAA announce plans to move seven 2016-2017 championship events out of North Carolina due to the law. PayPal canceled plans to open a new facility in North Carolina that would have created 400 new jobs. Bruce Springsteen becomes the first musician to cancel a show in Greensboro in protest of the bill. The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority announced that it had lost 13 conventions following the passage of HB2. German financial company Deutsche Bank froze plans to create 250 jobs at its technology development center in Cary, North Carolina. The NBA pulled the 2016-2017 All-Star Game from Charlotte. And those are just the beginning.

“We need to start talking about what Wisconsin could stand to lose if this bill is passed and local communities are prohibited from passing inclusive laws that would protect the LGBT community. It’s time we start asking the tough questions of our leaders in the business community about why they would want to support a bill that is so clearly bad for business? Do they want to see headlines like that about Wisconsin? Do they want the state to lose out on companies interested in heading here? Do we want to be the next laughing stock?

“We are proud to fight against this anti-LGBT bill and hope that are business organizations will join us in working to make Wisconsin a fully inclusive and welcoming state to do business.”