

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 20, 2016
Contact: Matthew Dowling
Email: Matthew.Dowling@Senate.Texas.Gov
Phone: 512-463-0128



**NEW ABA RULE DISCIPLINES LAWYERS FOR FAITH
SEN. CHARLES PERRY ASKS ATTORNEY GENERAL KEN PAXTON FOR
OPINION ON CONSTITUTIONALITY**

AUSTIN, TX – Today, Senator Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) is taking pre-emptive action by requesting an opinion from Texas Attorney General, Ken Paxton, concerning the constitutionality of a new rule for lawyers that could suppress freedom of religion and speech and could shut attorneys of faith out of the profession.

The American Bar Association (ABA) adopts model rules they believe states should adopt. Any rule a state adopts tells attorneys what they can and cannot do if they wish to keep practicing law. If an attorney breaks those rules, they run the risk of losing their license.

This month, the ABA adopted a new rule. This new rule has caused fear in attorneys all over Texas who have faith in God. The rule suggests that if an attorney is part of a legal organization that stands against same-sex marriage or transgender policies, the attorney could lose their license.

The State Bar of Texas currently has anti-discriminatory rules on the books regarding prejudice based on race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sex, or sexual orientations. However, if the State Bar of Texas adopts this same rule, it could open doors to punish lawyers who express views contrary to the State Bar with regard to religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

"This controversial rule could put lawyers at risk of losing their law license simply on the basis of their religious beliefs or association with a religious or political organization," said Perry. "This rule is in conflict with our First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and religion."

This rule will no doubt trickle down through the law schools which the ABA accredits, producing new lawyers that may be reluctant to express religious beliefs and values or associate with religious organizations out of fear of persecution or losing their job within the legal profession.

"The First Amendment grants us freedom of religion - not freedom from religion," continued Perry. "Just because an individual is a lawyer, does not mean they must choose between their spiritual beliefs or their career. Many have fought to

protect our freedoms so that any person may worship, or refrain from worship, without intimidation or fear of retribution from our government."

You can read Senator Perry's letter to Attorney General Ken Paxton here:
<http://freepdfhosting.com/c15de6883a.pdf>

###