

this title and section 504 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees] may be cited as the ‘Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993’.”

§ 2000bb-1. Free exercise of religion protected

(a) In general

Government shall not substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) Exception

Government may substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion only if it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person—

- (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and
- (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

(c) Judicial relief

A person whose religious exercise has been burdened in violation of this section may assert that violation as a claim or defense in a judicial proceeding and obtain appropriate relief against a government. Standing to assert a claim or defense under this section shall be governed by the general rules of standing under article III of the Constitution.

(Pub. L. 103-141, § 3, Nov. 16, 1993, 107 Stat. 1488.)

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 1996a of this title.

§ 2000bb-2. Definitions

As used in this chapter—

- (1) the term “government” includes a branch, department, agency, instrumentality, and official (or other person acting under color of law) of the United States, or of a covered entity;
- (2) the term “covered entity” means the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and each territory and possession of the United States;
- (3) the term “demonstrates” means meets the burdens of going forward with the evidence and of persuasion; and
- (4) the term “exercise of religion” means religious exercise, as defined in section 2000cc-5 of this title.

(Pub. L. 103-141, § 5, Nov. 16, 1993, 107 Stat. 1489; Pub. L. 106-274, § 7(a), Sept. 22, 2000, 114 Stat. 806.)

AMENDMENTS

2000—Par. (1). Pub. L. 106-274, § 7(a)(1), substituted “or of a covered entity” for “a State, or a subdivision of a State”.

Par. (2). Pub. L. 106-274, § 7(a)(2), substituted “term ‘covered entity’ means” for “term ‘State’ includes”.

Par. (4). Pub. L. 106-274, § 7(a)(3), substituted “religious exercise, as defined in section 2000cc-5 of this title” for “the exercise of religion under the First Amendment to the Constitution”.

§ 2000bb-3. Applicability

(a) In general

This chapter applies to all Federal law, and the implementation of that law, whether statu-

tory or otherwise, and whether adopted before or after November 16, 1993.

(b) Rule of construction

Federal statutory law adopted after November 16, 1993, is subject to this chapter unless such law explicitly excludes such application by reference to this chapter.

(c) Religious belief unaffected

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to authorize any government to burden any religious belief.

(Pub. L. 103-141, § 6, Nov. 16, 1993, 107 Stat. 1489; Pub. L. 106-274, § 7(b), Sept. 22, 2000, 114 Stat. 806.)

AMENDMENTS

2000—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 106-274 struck out “and State” after “Federal”.

§ 2000bb-4. Establishment clause unaffected

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to affect, interpret, or in any way address that portion of the First Amendment prohibiting laws respecting the establishment of religion (referred to in this section as the “Establishment Clause”). Granting government funding, benefits, or exemptions, to the extent permissible under the Establishment Clause, shall not constitute a violation of this chapter. As used in this section, the term “granting”, used with respect to government funding, benefits, or exemptions, does not include the denial of government funding, benefits, or exemptions.

(Pub. L. 103-141, § 7, Nov. 16, 1993, 107 Stat. 1489.)

CHAPTER 21C—PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS EXERCISE IN LAND USE AND BY INSTITUTIONALIZED PERSONS

Sec. 2000cc.	Protection of land use as religious exercise.
	(a) Substantial burdens.
	(b) Discrimination and exclusion.
2000cc-1.	Protection of religious exercise of institutionalized persons.
	(a) General rule.
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	(a) Cause of action.
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2000cc-3.	Rules of construction.
	(a) Religious belief unaffected.
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	(c) Claims to funding unaffected.
	(d) Other authority to impose conditions on funding unaffected.
	(e) Governmental discretion in alleviating burdens on religious exercise.
	(f) Effect on other law.
	(g) Broad construction.
	(h) No preemption or repeal.
	(i) Severability.