

## **Gratitude for Religious Freedom Legislation**

WHEREAS the most precious of all American liberties has been that of religious freedom; and

WHEREAS our founding fathers put religious freedom "at the head of the class" in the Bill of Rights because they well understood how throughout history government has sought to suppress religion or biasly favor one religion over others; and

WHEREAS a 1990 Supreme Court ruling made it easier for local and federal governments to pass laws that infringe upon religious beliefs (the Supreme Court case involving two men in Oregon who were denied unemployment benefits after losing their jobs because of participation in a religious ritual); and

WHEREAS a secularist and humanist society can ever so subtly undermine the principles of faith and religious freedom;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting for our 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Bellevue, Washington, on June 25–29, 1994, express our gratitude to the Congress and President of the United States for quickly passing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act last November that reversed the 1990 Supreme Court ruling and poses a stricter test that requires any restrictive laws serve a compelling government interest in a way that requires the lightest possible burden on religious freedom, and that holds government "to a very high level of proof before it interferes with someone's free exercise of religion;"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we reaffirm our belief that civil governments "have no jurisdiction in spiritual concerns, and have no right of dictation to, of control over, or of interference with, matters of religion; but are bound to protect all good citizens in the peaceable enjoyment of their religious rights and privileges" (Hiscox).

*Bellevue, Washington  
June 25–29, 1994*