



For Immediate Release

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William Jessup University Takes Firm Stand: SB 1146 Eliminates Religious Freedom

ROCKLIN, Calif. – William Jessup University, the Sacramento area’s only Christian residential four-year private university, is disappointed with the Senate’s passage today of Senate Bill 1146. If ultimately passed and allowed to become law, the bill would deny Jessup and other faith-based universities in California the ability to function based on religious beliefs and constitutional principles.

“We are deeply saddened at the discriminatory and limiting effect of this misguided bill because it will impact our university and all faith-based universities on a variety of levels,” said John Jackson, William Jessup University’s President. “Quite simply, limiting the religious exemption is equivalent to eliminating religious liberty in California higher education. In the end, SB 1146 will rob tens of thousands of students the resources they need for their education.”

The bill seeks to narrow a religious exemption in California to only those schools that prepare students for pastoral ministry. This functionally would eliminate the religious liberty of all California faith-based universities who integrate spiritual life with the entire campus educational experience. Prayer, chapel services, spiritual formation groups, and required public service are an integral part of the educational experience for faith-based campuses.

The passage of SB 1146 would mean that William Jessup University could face lawsuits challenging those requirements or policies regarding sexuality and

gender, even though the university has asked the Department of Education to acknowledge its exempt status under Title IX.

“We are holding tight to our core biblical beliefs,” Jackson said. “The passage of this bill would destroy the foundation upon which this university was founded. Our country was founded upon principles of religious liberty that enable people to express their religious convictions in their lives. We believe the Constitution provides for religious freedom in the public square.”

In addition to the major First Amendment issues at play in the current political environment (freedoms of religion, speech, and assembly), William Jessup University also believes these efforts undercut the very fabric of higher education, which advocates for diversity of opinion and freedom of discourse.

“Systematically discriminating against religious institutions and preventing student access and choice to Christian higher education is bad policy and will have a negative effect on the state of California,” Jackson added. “Our educational and religious missions are intertwined and separation of them is impossible.”

California has a highly developed and enviable higher education ecosystem where public and nonprofit private universities together serve the higher education needs of the state. Nonprofit universities educate more than 184,000 undergraduate students and 144,000 graduate students (over 50 percent of the total number) in California.

Nonprofit universities in California provide \$6 in aid for every \$1 received in Cal Grant funds, making the investment in California families and economy one of the strongest in the state. Ultimately, faith-based universities in California are a critical portion of the nonprofit university sector.

William Jessup and other faith-based universities in the state continue to urge reasonable dialogue in the State of California and implore political and educational leaders to join with all Californians in creating an environment where grace, kindness, and civil discourse can coexist with strong sentiment on matters of great importance. Mutual respect for individual persons and for the California Constitution, the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights is an outcome that William Jessup believes portends well for the state.

About William Jessup University

Founded in 1939 by William Jessup, the university moved to Rocklin, Calif. in August 2004. WJU is the first and only WASC accredited private four-year Christian university to have its main campus located in the greater Sacramento area, just 25 miles northeast of Sacramento. The university offers degrees in many disciplines, including a BS in Business, Kinesiology, Computer Science

and Environmental Science, and a BA in Psychology, Biology, English, Environmental Science, Creative Arts, History, Mathematics, Music, Liberal Studies-Teacher Credentialing, Public Policy, Bible & Theology, Family & Children's Ministry, Intercultural Studies, Pastoral Ministry, and Youth Ministry. Jessup also has a School of Professional Studies (SPS), focused on serving adult learners, at its campuses in Rocklin and San Jose. Programs include Business Administration, Christian Leadership, Criminal Justice, Organizational Leadership, Psychology, and Public Administration. A Master of Arts in Business, Education, Leadership and Teaching is also available in addition to Air Force ROTC (AFROTC.) For more information, please visit www.jessup.edu or call 1-844-JESSUPU.

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