

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



Thousands across U.S. try to sway Brewer on SB 1062

By Yvonne Wingett Sanchez The Republic | azcentral.com Wed Feb 26, 2014 11:56 AM

Gov. Jan Brewer's office has been flooded with more than 20,000 e-mails, letters and phone calls from Arizonans and people across the nation trying to influence her decision on the divisive right to refuse service legislation.

Brewer, who has until late Saturday to make her decision on Senate Bill 1062, is meeting privately today with people on both sides of the debate.

The Republican governor has not said publicly how she will act. But her recent statements seem to indicate a veto is imminent.

"I assure you, as always, I will do the right thing for the State of Arizona," a tweet posted to her official Twitter account said late Tuesday.

The legislation landed on her desk Monday and as each day has passed emotions surrounding the debate have heightened. Many are questioning why the governor is taking so long to act on the bill.

There is speculation Brewer will veto the bill no later than Friday evening, when she is scheduled to be honored by the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which is among the business groups strongly opposed to the bill.

Some political insiders believe Brewer has allowed furor over the legislation to build in order to thwart attempts by social conservatives to push a similar bill this session.

E-mails obtained by *The Arizona Republic* through a public-records request highlight the passion behind the debate. The newspaper asked Brewer's office for a representative sample of correspondence; the office produced four e-mails.

The subject line of one e-mail from Michelle Cruz sent Tuesday said one word, "Faith." She urged the governor to sign SB 1062.

"Our Constitution guarantees that in America, people are free to live and work according to their faith," Cruz wrote. "Yet as religious hostility grows throughout the nation, it has become clear that his fundamental right is under attack. That's why I ask you to sign SB 1062, to make it clear that all people of faith are welcome in our state. No one should be forced to forfeit their

religious beliefs simply because they go to work or start a business. Please stand up for religious liberty and Sign SB 1062!”

Likewise, Marlene Stigsell asked Brewer to sign the bill, saying religious liberties are being threatened.

“SB 1062 will help avoid the situations being experienced around the country where businesses are being forced to close because of their owners’ faith,” Stigsell wrote.

On the other side, Kathleen Laird wrote the legislation is “bad for business, bad for Arizona’s economy, will encourage frivolous lawsuits, and encourages discrimination of classes of people who are not covered under anti-discrimination laws.”

And Debra Mulligan wrote to Brewer the legislation “is totally unnecessary.”

“Arizonans value freedom and equality,” Mulligan wrote. “Please support the Golden Rule by vetoing this bill. If it passes into law, it will only open the door to discrimination and create a legal and bureaucratic mess — once again propelling the state into the spotlight for all the wrong reasons.”

John Boyd, principal of The Boyd Company, Inc. based in New Jersey, helps companies re-locate to Arizona and around the world. He said clients are concerned about setting up shop in the state.

He said his company has monitored the legislation closely and that concern over the proposal has surpassed that of the tough immigration law known as SB 1070 that Brewer signed into law four years ago.

“This is reminiscent of what we experience years ago over the MLK fiasco,” Boyd told *The Republic* on Wednesday morning. He said corporate clients are worried how the legislation, if signed into law, would affect their abilities to recruit and retain workers.

“Arizona is in a fistfight for the best workers,” he said. “Any barrier to attracting the best workers is a huge negative.”