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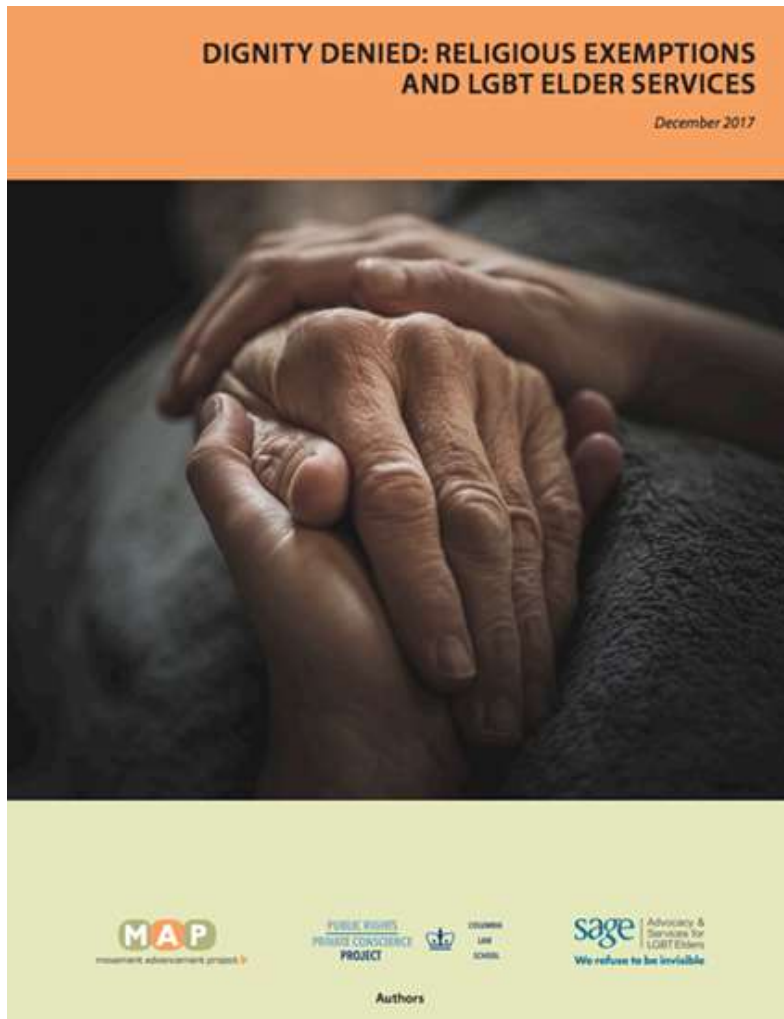
Elizabeth Boylan, *Dignity Denied: Religious Exemptions and LGBT Elder Services*, (2017).

Available at: https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/gender_sexuality_law/70

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Dignity Denied: Religious Exemptions and LGBT Elder Services

By Elizabeth Boylan
December 15, 2017



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[Access a .pdf of the report, "Dignity Denied: Religious Exemptions and LGBT Elder Services" here](#)

It is estimated that there are approximately 2.7 million LGBT adults aged 50 and older in the United States, 1.1 million of whom are 65 and older. LGBT older adults, like many older Americans in the United States, rely on a network of service providers as they age—for community programming and congregate meals, for health care, and for housing ranging from independent living to skilled nursing. Research finds that a majority of these services are offered by religiously affiliated organizations. While many of these religiously affiliated facilities provide quality care for millions of older adults, there is a coordinated effort to pass

religious exemption laws, issue executive orders and agency guidance, and to litigate court cases to allow individuals, businesses, and even government contractors and grantees to use religion to discriminate. These laws are particularly worrisome for LGBT elders. Religious exemption laws jeopardize the security and safety of LGBT older adults at a time when they are most vulnerable and most in need.

The report was launched with a panel discussion program hosted at Columbia University's Union Theological Seminary on Friday, December 15th, 2017, detailing the increased risks LGBT older adults face as a result of recent religious exemption laws and policies. Speakers included:

- Alex Sheldon, Research Analyst, The Movement Advancement Project
- Audrey Weiner, President and CEO, The New Jewish Home
- Carmelyn P. Malalis, Chair and Commissioner, New York City Commission on Human Rights
- Fred Davie, Executive Vice President, Union Theological Seminary
- Jonathan Soto, NYC Mayor's Office: Executive Director of the Center for Faith and Community Partnerships
- Katherine Franke, Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Public Rights/Private Conscience Project, Columbia Law School
- Michael Adams, CEO, SAGE
- Rose Saxe, Senior Staff Attorney, LGBT & HIV Project, American Civil Liberties Union
- Sandy Warshaw, SAGE Constituent