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**(Neb.)-Bills Would Stop Job Discrimination Against Gays**

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 03/15/2013 07:12 AM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Lawmakers heard passionate testimony for and against three bills that would expand gay rights in Nebraska.

A Thursday Judiciary Committee hearing was cut short at 5:30 p.m., with many people still wishing to testify.

One bill would prevent businesses from discriminating against current or prospective employees based on their sexual orientation. Religious groups would not have to comply. Religious activists opposed the bill, saying the proposal infringes on freedom of religion and would create a special protected class.

Same sex couples and adoption advocates also asked lawmakers to allow gays to become adoptive or foster parents.

Proponents were allowed to speak for an hour and a half, while opponents testified for more than two hours. No neutral testimony was heard.