An open letter to Indiana businesses:

Maryland is open for business, and – unlike Indiana – we treat all of our citizens with dignity and compassion. I invite any business concerned about the impact of Indiana’s so-called Religious Freedom Restoration Act to pack up and move to Maryland.

In the global economy, the competition for innovative people is fierce. With their profoundly divisive action, your state policymakers made it harder for you to attract world-class talent. Whether you’re a major employer like Eli Lilly or Angie’s List, or a local startup trying to turn a brilliant idea into a profitable business, Governor Pence and his cronies put you at an extraordinary competitive disadvantage.

In Maryland, you will find remarkable assets to benefit your business, a government that wants to help you compete, and people who value diversity and reject state-sponsored discrimination.

We are home to one of the world’s most educated and highest earning workforces. We have one of the nation’s best public school systems. We are home to international leaders in innovation, including research universities and federal installations, and a thriving startup culture. We have a robust transportation system, with an expanding port, a booming airport, and great highways. With the Appalachian Mountains, Chesapeake Bay, and Atlantic Ocean in our backyard, you will have outstanding opportunities for rest and relaxation while you are not growing your business.

We are leveraging these assets to make Maryland attractive for you to locate your business. We prioritize partnerships between government, industry and academia. EARN Maryland, for instance, is an industry-led, state-funded partnership developing regional workforce development pipelines. We offer tax credits, grants and investments which aid cybersecurity and technology entrepreneurs. We are working every single day to strengthen our business climate.

Finally – and of great significance to employees or prospective employees who are LGBT or have an LGBT family member – we flatly reject state-sponsored bigotry. In 2012, Maryland voters approved marriage equality. We have strong anti-discrimination laws. And a proposal like the so-called Religious Freedom Restoration Act? It would never see the light of day in our General Assembly.

Indiana’s elected officials sent you a message: They are more concerned about fighting culture wars than fostering a competitive business climate. Now you can send them a message by packing up and moving your business to Maryland.

Luke Clippinger

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