

as a condition of receiving funding or other assistance; or

(2) restrict any authority that may exist under other law to so regulate or affect, except as provided in this chapter.

**(e) Governmental discretion in alleviating burdens on religious exercise**

A government may avoid the preemptive force of any provision of this chapter by changing the policy or practice that results in a substantial burden on religious exercise, by retaining the policy or practice and exempting the substantially burdened religious exercise, by providing exemptions from the policy or practice for applications that substantially burden religious exercise, or by any other means that eliminates the substantial burden.

**(f) Effect on other law**

With respect to a claim brought under this chapter, proof that a substantial burden on a person's religious exercise affects, or removal of that burden would affect, commerce with foreign nations, among the several States, or with Indian tribes, shall not establish any inference or presumption that Congress intends that any religious exercise is, or is not, subject to any law other than this chapter.

**(g) Broad construction**

This chapter shall be construed in favor of a broad protection of religious exercise, to the maximum extent permitted by the terms of this chapter and the Constitution.

**(h) No preemption or repeal**

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to preempt State law, or repeal Federal law, that is equally as protective of religious exercise as, or more protective of religious exercise than, this chapter.

**(i) Severability**

If any provision of this chapter or of an amendment made by this chapter, or any application of such provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this chapter, the amendments made by this chapter, and the application of the provision to any other person or circumstance shall not be affected.

(Pub. L. 106-274, §5, Sept. 22, 2000, 114 Stat. 805.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 106-274, Sept. 22, 2000, 114 Stat. 803, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 2000cc of this title and Tables.

**§ 2000cc-4. Establishment Clause unaffected**

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to affect, interpret, or in any way address that portion of the first amendment to the Constitution prohibiting laws respecting an establishment of religion (referred to in this section as the "Establishment Clause"). Granting government funding, benefits, or exemptions, to the extent permissible under the Establishment Clause, shall not constitute a violation of this chapter. In this section, the term "granting", used with

respect to government funding, benefits, or exemptions, does not include the denial of government funding, benefits, or exemptions.

(Pub. L. 106-274, §6, Sept. 22, 2000, 114 Stat. 806.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 106-274, Sept. 22, 2000, 114 Stat. 803, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 2000cc of this title and Tables.

**§ 2000cc-5. Definitions**

In this chapter:

**(1) Claimant**

The term "claimant" means a person raising a claim or defense under this chapter.

**(2) Demonstrates**

The term "demonstrates" means meets the burdens of going forward with the evidence and of persuasion.

**(3) Free Exercise Clause**

The term "Free Exercise Clause" means that portion of the first amendment to the Constitution that proscribes laws prohibiting the free exercise of religion.

**(4) Government**

The term "government"—

(A) means—

(i) a State, county, municipality, or other governmental entity created under the authority of a State;

(ii) any branch, department, agency, instrumentality, or official of an entity listed in clause (i); and

(iii) any other person acting under color of State law; and

(B) for the purposes of sections 2000cc-2(b) and 2000cc-3 of this title, includes the United States, a branch, department, agency, instrumentality, or official of the United States, and any other person acting under color of Federal law.

**(5) Land use regulation**

The term "land use regulation" means a zoning or landmarking law, or the application of such a law, that limits or restricts a claimant's use or development of land (including a structure affixed to land), if the claimant has an ownership, leasehold, easement, servitude, or other property interest in the regulated land or a contract or option to acquire such an interest.

**(6) Program or activity**

The term "program or activity" means all of the operations of any entity as described in paragraph (1) or (2) of section 2000d-4a of this title.

**(7) Religious exercise**

**(A) In general**

The term "religious exercise" includes any exercise of religion, whether or not compelled by, or central to, a system of religious belief.