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Walker noncommittal on 'religious freedom' law for Wisconsin, again talks stance on immigration

Gov. Scott Walker today was noncommittal on whether he believes Wisconsin should adopt something similar to Indiana's "religious freedom" law, saying it's not something that's been debated at any length here "but we'll have to see in the future."

Indiana's law, officially the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, has drawn scrutiny in recent weeks with opponents saying it would allow businesses to discriminate against gays and lesbians. Some of the law's backers have disputed that, saying the law was only intended to protect religion from government intrusion.

Asked if businesses should have the option to refuse service to customers, such as gays, based on religious grounds, Walker replied, "Well again, in our state, there's a balance between wanting to make sure there is not discrimination but at the same time, respecting religious freedoms. We do that different ways than what they've done in the state of Indiana, and certainly that's going to be part of the debate here and across the country."

Walker, who was in Milwaukee for a public appearance, would not say whether he would sign such a law, saying he did not expect such a bill coming "any time soon."

Walker also attempted to clarify his stance on immigration after questions were raised last week

if he had privately backed a path to citizenship for those in the country illegally after saying publicly he did not support such an option.

He said he first backed securing the border, noting he toured the area with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott late last week. He called it a security concern, saying cartels are trafficking drugs, weapons and humans across the border.

Once secure, the government could move forward with enforcing laws already on the books through an e-verify system.

"I do not believe in amnesty for citizenship," Walker said. "I believe that if someone wants to become a citizen they need to go to their country of origin and come in the system just like anyone else, and then beyond that, I think that's going to take a lot of work and a lot of effort. Then the next president and the Congress are going to have to look at working together and setting a policy on what to do for others who are seeking something other than citizenship."

-- *By Kay Nolan*