

Important Message from the Social Concerns Committee:

March 25, 2021

The Social Concerns Committee (SCC) of the Charis Fellowship has been charged by the Fellowship Council and the Executive Director with presenting to the Fellowship annual resolutions focused on Biblical Values concerning social issues. The SCC offers information and documents dealing with rapidly changing or developing social issues from time to time.

To that end, the Charis Fellowship SCC provides the following information with permission from the Ohio Christian Alliance.

Senate taking up Equality Act – Tell your Senator to vote NO!

In the coming weeks, it is expected that the Senate will vote on this bill.

PLEASE call or email your congressional representatives about this bill, H.R. 5.

It is time to make our voices heard!

Why is this so important? The Equality Act would overhaul our federal civil rights framework to mandate abortion access and special privileges for sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), leaving many to suffer the consequences, including women, children, medical professionals, and people of faith.

The Equality Act mandates an anti-life, anti-family, and anti-faith agenda upon all Americans.

Here is a brief overview of some of the problems with the Equality Act:

The Equality Act jeopardizes women's privacy and safety.

The Equality Act's expansion of the Title II "Public Accommodations" definition means that females would no longer have privacy in public bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, or even battered women's shelters. State and local laws to this effect are already causing fallout: A kindergartener was assaulted by a boy in her school bathroom. A rape survivor was forced to quit her job when her employer began allowing men into women's private facilities. A man was allowed residence in a shelter, and nine women are suing because they were sexually harassed.

The Equality Act unfairly penalizes female athletes by allowing biological men to compete in women's sports.

For example, biological boys won first and second place at a Connecticut girls' high school indoor track championship. As a result, two biological girls fell below the threshold to advance to the next meet, inhibiting their ability to be seen by college recruiters and obtain scholarships. Scholarships are sometimes the only avenue students have to pursue higher education, which could lead to better job opportunities and better pay.

The Equality Act would undermine real civil rights gains women have made.

For example, the Small Business Administration Office of Women's Business Ownership, whose mission is to "enable and empower women entrepreneurs through advocacy, outreach, education and support," would have to give biological men who identify as women access to its programs.

The Equality Act would interfere with the medical profession.

It would force doctors and others who provide legitimate hormone treatments and surgical procedures for patients with certain physical conditions to offer those treatments for individuals with gender dysphoria. Their moral or medical opinions about assisting individuals in physically altering their bodies would be disregarded. Medicine would be politicized despite science telling us these treatments are actually harmful. A 2011 Swedish study, one of the most robust on the issue, found that post-surgery individuals had a suicide completion rate 19 times higher than the general population. The risk of psychiatric hospitalization was 2.8 times higher even after adjustment for prior psychiatric disease. Additionally, death by neoplasm (a benign or cancerous mass) and cardiovascular disease was 2 to 2.5 times higher. There is also evidence that puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones can cause cancer, heart disease, diabetes, blood clots, stroke, and more. The Equality Act's requirements would override a doctor's concern about any of these points.

The Equality Act could erode parental rights.

When Ohio parents declined hormone treatment for their child, the Children's Hospital of Cincinnati involved child protective services, and the parents were ultimately stripped of their parental rights.

The Equality Act would severely erode religious freedom.

The Equality Act expressly exempts itself from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), our flagship religious liberty law.

The Equality Act's expansion of public accommodations could require churches and houses of worship to violate their beliefs regarding how they use their facilities.

Its changes to employment law would prohibit some houses of worship from ensuring their clergy and employees abide by their doctrines or beliefs about marriage, sexual behavior, and the distinction between the sexes.

Federal aid could be denied to students attending faith-based institutions unless those institutions abandon policies and practices reflecting their sincerely held beliefs about marriage and sexuality.

The Equality Act would inhibit faith-based charities' ability to operate.

Faith-based organizations and others play a vital role in the adoption and foster care system and generally receive funding under Title IV of the Social Security Act to help do their important work. The Equality Act would force them to violate their beliefs or shut down, displacing children like the thousands left hanging in Illinois when Catholic Charities was shut down under a similar law.

The Equality Act could be the most pro-abortion legislation to pass the House in a decade.

Not only would this bill expand “public accommodations” to include health care providers, but it would add sex discrimination as a protected class. It would then define prohibitions on “sex discrimination” to include preventing treating “pregnancy...or a related medical condition” (which can include abortion) less favorably than other physical conditions. This change would essentially create an abortion mandate. In conjunction with the RFRA exemption and expansion of what constitutes a public accommodation, this also jeopardizes long-standing federal conscience laws that protect those opposed to abortion. The Hyde Amendment, which prohibits taxpayer funding for abortion, would also be in jeopardy.

The Equality Act shamefully attempts to usurp the civil rights movement’s history and legacy.

In no way are one’s sexual conduct and inclinations equivalent to skin color. Suggesting or implying as much diminishes the hard-fought gains of this movement. Indeed, scientific evidence shows that “sexual orientation” is quite fluid and that “gender identity” is not fixed. But if the Equality Act becomes law, its backers may use the courts to force its ideas into public school curricula around the country. Indeed, the idea that these notions are equivalent to skin color is false, and failure to recognize this falsehood only harms all affected.

The Equality Act mandates an anti-life, anti-family, and anti-faith agenda upon all Americans.

Please contact your Representative today and request them to vote NO on the Equality Act!

To find information on how to contact your Senator, the following website may be of assistance:
<https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/>

If you haven’t yet read through the full Equality Act document, you can find it here:
<https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr5/BILLS-117hr5pcs.pdf>