

Truth about the Equality Act **From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

The bill is well-intentioned but ultimately misguided. The Equality Act discriminates against people of faith, threatens unborn life, and undermines the common good. Human dignity is central to what we believe as Catholics. Every person is made in the image of God and should be treated accordingly, with respect and compassion. That means we need to honor every person's right to be free of unjust discrimination.

The Equality Act purports to protect people experiencing same-sex attraction or gender discordance from unjust discrimination. Although this is a worthy purpose, the Equality Act does not serve it. And instead of respecting differences in beliefs about marriage and sexuality, the Equality Act discriminates against people of faith precisely because of those beliefs. In the process, the Equality Act codifies the new ideology of "gender" in federal law, dismissing sexual difference and falsely presenting "gender" as only a social construct.

The Equality Act:

- Exempts itself from the bipartisan Religious Freedom Restoration Act, in an explicit and unprecedented departure from one of America's founding principles, thereby infringing on religious freedom and making it more difficult for individuals to live out their faith
- forces religiously operated spaces and establishments, such as church halls, to either host functions that violate their beliefs or close their doors to their communities
- requires women to compete against men and boys in sports, and to share locker rooms and shower facilities with men and boys
- forces faith-based charities that serve all people to violate their religious beliefs, and threatens the welfare of thousands of beneficiaries of charitable services such as shelters and foster care agencies, by forcing a multitude of them to be shut down
- jeopardizes existing prohibitions on the use of federal taxpayer funds for abortion, likely pressuring or even mandating the performance of abortions by health care providers in violation of their consciences, and ultimately ending more human lives
- hinders quality health care, by forcing health care professionals, against their best medical judgment, to support treatments and procedures associated with "gender transition."

The Catholic Church is the largest non-governmental provider of human services in the United States, helping millions of Americans in need through its parishes, schools, hospitals, shelters, legal clinics, food banks, and charities. Our core beliefs about the dignity of the human person and the wisdom of God's design motivate both our positions on marriage, life, and sexuality, and our call to serve those most in need and the common good. By running roughshod over religious liberty, the Equality Act directly undermines the Church's ability to fulfill that call.