



ERLC Opposes H.R. 5 The Equality Act

The ERLC affirms the full dignity of every human being. At the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Messengers passed a resolution to “reaffirm the sacredness and full dignity and worthiness of respect and Christian love for every single human being, without any reservation.” The SBC’s commitment to love of neighbor is grounded in the truth that “God created man in His own image; He created Him in the image of God; He created them male and female.” (Gen. 1:26-27)

The Equality Act fails to uphold human dignity in its attempt to codify the demands of the Sexual Revolution. While the proposed intention of H.R. 5 is to protect individuals who identify as LGBT, the bill would instead steamroll the consciences of millions of people. As Russell Moore, president of the ERLC often notes, “A government that can pave over the consciences of some can steamroll over dissent everywhere.” H.R. 5 undermines foundational Constitutional freedoms in its pursuit of what may be momentary cultural affirmations.

H.R. 5 threatens the efforts of faith-based adoption and foster care agencies. The legislation would explicitly curtail the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 which would force faith-based child welfare organizations to either abandon their deeply held religious beliefs or be shut down. The state forced closures of such agencies is especially detrimental at a time when the opioid crisis increases the number of children in need of forever families.

H.R. 5 hinders the work of healthcare professionals and faith-based hospitals. While religiously affiliated hospitals routinely serve patients of any background, including those who identify as LGBT, providers who hold moral or religious beliefs cannot perform every procedure a patient requests.

H.R. 5 undermines decades of civil rights protections for women and girls. Women’s shelters for those escaping domestic abuse or the trappings of homelessness would be forced to house biological men who identify as female. The Equality Act disregards the privacy and safety concerns women rightly have about sharing sleeping quarters and intimate facilities with the opposite sex. This legislation would also halt the advances achieved in women’s sports and scholarship since the passage of Title IX in 1972.

These proposed changes to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would bring a dramatic shift in civil rights law, religious liberty, and the foundations of civic pluralism. The redefinition of “sex” in the list of protected classes as “sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity)” is as logically inconsistent as it is devastating to the generations of American effort to ensure the equality of all men and women. This legislation would make the situation worse for Americans who disagree to work together for the common good. Due to these concerns, among many others, **the ERLC opposes H.R. 5, the Equality Act.**
