



The Equality Act is a proposed amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act which would prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in areas including public accommodations, education, federal funding, employment, and more. The bill expands the definition of public accommodations to include places or establishments that provide recreation, amusement, gatherings, goods, services, programs, and others. The bill also prohibits an individual from being denied access to a shared facility, including a restroom or locker room, that is in accordance with the individual's gender identity.

The Equality Act nullifies the protections for religious liberty found in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. As a result, religious individuals and ministries that provide essential services to the public may be banned from continuing their ministry to the community, including schools, homeless shelters, facilities providing healthcare, addiction treatment, and pregnancy assistance. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Equality Act on February 25, 2021. The U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee received the legislation on March 17, 2021 and has not made any further actions.

Adult and Teen Challenge of the Upper Cumberland is a faith-based addiction treatment facility that maintains belief in the historic Christian sexual ethic and understanding of gender. We believe the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals can be protected without threatening religious communities.

The origin and substance of the Equality Act fall well beneath the standard necessary to cultivate a healthy pluralistic society. This legislation is not the product of a thoughtful and healthy civic dialogue or a transparent policy-making process. It was not discussed in detail with a diverse set of faith leaders who'll bear the brunt of its excesses. It's a danger not just to Christian institutions, but those belonging to our Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist, and Muslim neighbors as well. The Equality Act reflects our broken system, not the civic spirit and good faith measures necessary to heal it. It would remove many of the basic rights that allow religious organizations to operate according to the tenets of their faith. It would allow LGBTQ+ rights to be used as a sword against faith institutions rather than a shield to protect the vulnerable. The Equality Act needlessly pits the concerns of diverse communities against each other.

We, therefore, urge you to research the Equality Act further, publicly stand against the Equality Act, pray against the Equality Act, research alternatives to this legislation such as the Fairness for All Act, contact your congressional representatives, and demand for a for a full debate and vote on the legislation.