

Statement by Alaska Faith Leaders

Opposing Equality Act

We are Christian pastors and leaders from across the state of Alaska, and we are writing in opposition to the Equality Act.

We firmly believe that all people have dignity and are made in the image of God, and one aspect of that is that God created us “male and female” (Genesis 1:27). To act or speak otherwise – as the Equality Act would require – would be to violate our deeply held religious convictions. Moreover, we believe that the policies advanced by the Equality Act would greatly harm our neighbors from many walks of life.

The Equality Act could force people of faith in a variety of professions to choose between violating their beliefs or losing their livelihood.

Medical professionals could be forced to promote or participate in medical “gender transition,” a process which can leave patients sterile and potentially involves amputating or altering healthy body parts. This is something to which even some non-religious medical professionals may object because of the harm it can inflict on patients.

Faith-based nonprofits would be affected, as well. Foster and adoption agencies, for example, could be compelled to affirm a young child’s belief that they were born in the wrong body, and to only place children in homes that would likewise affirm this belief. If they don’t comply, they could be forced to shut their doors – limiting the already-slim resources for children in need. Similarly, battered women’s shelters may be compelled to admit men into their facilities, despite knowing that this may cause women to re-live the trauma of the abuse from which they are trying to recover.

Meanwhile, the Act could threaten the freedom of artists and other professionals to live according to their beliefs, and the ability of our own churches to require employees to abide by core tenets of our own faith. Adding insult to injury, the Equality Act would specifically bar invocation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

Even for those who do *not* hold religious convictions, the Equality Act poses a threat. Notably, it could undermine parental rights – harming families across the nation. And, it would force schools to allow males to compete in and win sports contests reserved for females.

As Christians, we are compelled to follow Jesus’ commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself.” We consider it unloving to electively subject a young person to potential sterilization and mutilation, “treatments” which fail to heal the wounds of the heart. We believe it is unloving and unwise to undermine the ability of parents to lovingly care for their children in the way they see best. And, it is certainly unloving to force victims of abuse to re-live their trauma, or to make talented female athletes watch as their opportunities for athletic achievement are swept from under their feet.

We oppose the Equality Act because it is unloving to our neighbors and because it stands to threaten the ability of people of faith to live according to their convictions.