

May 13, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Pence
President of the Senate
S-212, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Clyburn
Majority Whip
H-329, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Whip
S-208, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Minority Whip
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Minority Whip
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

An Open Letter from Evangelical and Christian leaders on H.R. 5, the *Equality Act*

Dear Congressional Leaders:

As those tasked with the leadership of the church, and as those seeking to humbly convey Biblical truth for the benefit of every man, woman, and child in society, we the undersigned cannot remain silent concerning a dangerous bill pending in Congress known as the *Equality Act* (H.R. 5). Not only is it incompatible with God's Word (the Bible) and the historic teaching of the church, but the *Equality Act* is also riddled with threats to religious liberty and the sanctity of human life. For these reasons, we must state that we adamantly oppose this proposed legislation.

First, the ideology enshrined in the *Equality Act*—which falsely equates one's sexual conduct with immutable characteristics like skin color and ethnicity—is a falsehood that openly contradicts the scriptural mandates we were given for our good (1 Thess. 4:3-8). We cannot remain silent and allow this lie to harm countless men, women, and children—whether in this or any other legislation. Passage of this coercive measure would lay the groundwork for this lie to enter classrooms across the nation, as public educators could be compelled to teach it to their students. No family would be safe from the long reach of the *Equality Act*.

Second, the *Equality Act* would gut religious freedom protections—even the freedom currently enjoyed by houses of worship. Under its changes to the employment nondiscrimination provisions in

Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act*, some houses of worship would be barred from ensuring their leaders and other employees abide by their beliefs about marriage, sexual behavior, and the distinction between the sexes. Women who identify as men would have to be accepted as men and therefore potentially eligible to serve in positions reserved for men (such as a Catholic Priest or Jewish Rabbi). Religious employers that fall under Title VII may be forced to offer insurance coverage for medical procedures (such as hormone therapy or surgery related to “gender transition”) that violate biblical teaching. Finally, the *Equality Act* would expressly do away with the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act’s* application to its provisions, thereby precluding any religious freedom claims which clergy or others might bring. Under such restrictions, the pathway for the gospel would slowly be closed off.

The *Equality Act* would also harm faith-based adoption providers and other charities. 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 perform their essential work. There are over 440,000 children in foster care, and more than 100,000 of them are available for adoption. The numbers are only getting higher; nearly 90,000 children a year enter the foster care system due to the opioid crisis alone. The *Equality Act* would force faith-based organizations to choose between continuing their life-affirming work or violating the tenets of their faith, the very faith that drives them to care for society’s most vulnerable.

Third, the *Equality Act* is unacceptable because it is anti-life and creates a right to demand abortion from health care providers. The termination of human life in the womb is unacceptable to any biblically and historically faithful Christian. The responsibility to care for the “least of these” (Matt. 25:40) is a fundamental responsibility of Christ’s church, and any proposal that undermines a culture of life must be rejected.

As Evangelical and Christian leaders humbly attempting to be faithful to God’s Word and historic biblical doctrine, we must clearly state our opposition to the *Equality Act* and any similar measures. Simply put, this bill will harm men, women, and children, and stifle freedom. It must be stopped.

Sincerely,

Tony Perkins
President, Family Research Council

Michele Bachmann
Former U.S. Representative
Executive Director, Well Versed – United Nations

Paul Blair
Senior Pastor, Fairview Baptist Church, Edmond, OK
President, Reclaiming America for Christ

Stephen Broden
Fair Park Bible Fellowship, Dallas, TX

Carter Conlon
Senior Pastor, Times Square Church, New York City, NY

James Dobson
Founder & President, Dr. James Dobson Family Institute

Jim Garlow
Founder & CEO, Well Versed

Franklin Graham
President & CEO, Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

Jack Graham
Senior Pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, TX

Jack Hibbs
Senior Pastor, Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, Chino, CA

Harry Jackson, Jr.
Senior Pastor, Hope Christian Church, Beltsville, MD
Presiding Bishop, International Communion of Evangelical Churches

Robert Jeffress
Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Dallas, TX

Guillermo Maldonado
Founder & Apostle, King Jesus International Ministry

Eric Metaxas
Author & Host, The Eric Metaxas Show

Robert Morris
Founding Lead Senior Pastor, Gateway Church, Southlake, TX

Ramiro Peña
Senior Pastor, Christ the King Church, Waco, TX

Everett Piper
President, Oklahoma Wesleyan University

Ralph Reed
Founder & Chairman, Faith & Freedom Coalition

James Robison
Founder & President, LIFE Outreach International

Todd Wagner
Senior Pastor, Watermark Community Church, Dallas, TX

Tim Wildmon
President, American Family Association