

American Council of Christian Churches  
78<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, October 22-24, 2019  
Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA  
Resolution on Religious Freedom and “The Equality Act”

The apostle Paul instructed his assistant in ministry, Timothy, that prayer was an important priority for the churches of Jesus Christ. Church members must pray “for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:2-4). The god of this world militates against the prayers of God’s people, obscures the truth from men in authority, cares little for what is good and acceptable in the sight of God, hates the salvation from sin offered to the souls of men, and oppresses believers with religious persecution and political tyranny all over the globe.

Many of our nation’s founders had fled such persecution, believing that religious freedom is the first freedom man needs. Even the skeptics among them understood with Thomas Paine that “political as well as spiritual freedom is the gift of God through Christ.” He was “fully convinced that spiritual freedom is the root of political liberty” (*Thoughts on Defensive War*, 1775).<sup>1</sup> Our nation’s Bill of Rights concurs, opening with the guarantee of religious freedom. All other rights are then built on that foundation.

Seduced by the deceptions of the god of this world and void of this original American appreciation for the priority of religious freedom, the U.S. House of Representatives passed “The Equality Act” on May 17, 2019. Eight Republicans joined all but seven abstaining Democrats to approve the bill as law, 236-173 (16 Republicans abstained, and no Democrats voted against the bill). The stated purpose of the Act is “to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes.”<sup>2</sup>

The Equality Act would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in many areas of life on the basis of “race, color, religion, or

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume One of Moncure Daniel Conway’s *The Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1894), 57; available online at Google Books.

<sup>2</sup> Text of the legislation is at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5>. See Kevin Hobi, “Scripture on ‘The Equality Act,’” *The Review* (May 2019), pp. 2-6 <http://www.ibfna.com/the-review-may-2019-2/>. The National Association of Evangelicals has responded inadequately to this situation. Although the NAE is currently against “The Equality Act” (<https://www.nae.net/religious-freedom-concerns-equality-act/>) for its attack on explicitly religious institutions, the NAE still promoted SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) legislation in 2018 that would deny religious liberty to Christian business owners of secular businesses/institutions ([https://world.wng.org/2018/12/boards\\_back\\_sogi\\_compromise](https://world.wng.org/2018/12/boards_back_sogi_compromise)).

national origin.” Section 703 of the current law prohibits discrimination in the form of “Unlawful Employment Practices,” and in that section the protected groups listed are the four above with the addition of “sex” after “religion.” The amendment inserts a parenthetical after “sex,” so the list of protected groups becomes: “race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), or national origin,” and it then would make this phrase the list of protected groups in every other Section of the law. This placement of the parenthetical phrase means that the goal of this Act is to make discrimination because of “sexual orientation” or “gender identity” illegal in the same way that discrimination because of “sex” would be. The goal concludes that questions of “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” have more to do with “sex” than they do with the other protected categories, like “religion.”

This conclusion is in error. The law’s current category “sex” depends upon a discernable heterosexual distinction between male and female. The parenthetical obliterates the category by confusing that distinction. More correctly, “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” refer to religious doctrines of anthropology. As such, Bible believers, whose anthropology comes from the pages of Scripture, understand “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to be false religious doctrines, which, when codified into law, would discriminate against them and violate their constitutional rights of religious liberty. The parenthetical insertion of “The Equality Act” legislation destroys the equal protections of religious freedom by enshrining a state-sponsored religious anthropology as the law of the land for everyone to believe and live by.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches at its 78th annual convention, October 22-24, 2019, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA, resolves to expose the threat to religious freedom posed by “The Equality Act” as state-sponsored religious tyranny. We aver that our consciences are bound by Scripture when it comes to what we believe about the nature of mankind and human sexuality, that God made man in His own image as male and female, commanding them to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth through monogamous, heterosexual marriage (Gen. 1:26-28). While we are committed to live peaceably with all men of differing religious viewpoints, we reject the anthropology of the sponsors of “The Equality Act,” and we refuse to submit to laws that require us to violate our consciences when it comes to these important religious doctrines (Acts 5:29).<sup>3</sup> We call on Congress and the President to respect our First Amendment rights and reject “The Equality Act.”



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<sup>3</sup> “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, ‘We ought to obey God rather than men’” (Acts 5:29).