



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

# The Harms of the Equality Act

## ABOUT THE SO-CALLED “EQUALITY ACT”

The Equality Act elevates sexual orientation and gender identity to protected class status in existing federal nondiscrimination laws governing places of public accommodation, employment, housing, and recipients of federal financial assistance. Though “nondiscrimination” sounds good in the abstract, in practice this bill poses a serious threat to women’s rights and religious freedom.



Selina Soule missed qualifying for the state championship 55m final and an opportunity to qualify for the New England women’s championship by one spot in the 2018-2019 season—two spots were taken by males.

## HARMS TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

- The Equality Act could nullify many of the opportunities previously guaranteed by Title IX, which provides women equal access to education opportunities on the same basis as men. It could mandate that men who identify as women be allowed to compete for spots on female sports teams, women’s scholarships, and other academic and sports-related opportunities designed specifically for women.
- It could violate the privacy and safety of women and force them to share sex-separated spaces with men such as showers, locker rooms, and other private spaces.

## HARMS TO MEDICAL RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE

- The Equality Act could force doctors, counselors, and healthcare practitioners to violate their conscience by requiring them to prescribe puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and “sex-reassignment surgery” to otherwise healthy children who are struggling with their gender identity, even though such treatments cause severe and often irreversible harm, including permanent sterilization.

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## HARMS TO RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS, AND CHILD WELFARE PROVIDERS

- The Equality Act would harm the over 400,000 children in our nation’s foster care system by closing down faith-based adoption and foster care providers who believe children thrive best in a home with a married mother and father.
- It would significantly threaten the many faith-based social service organizations that receive federal grants to enable them to better serve the most vulnerable among us every day. These organizations would be prohibited from living out their beliefs about marriage or human sexuality as a condition of continuing to receive federal funding.
- It would deny federal financial aid to students at faith-based colleges and universities unless those schools abandon policies and practices reflecting their sincerely held beliefs about marriage and sexuality.



Shortly after putting out an urgent call for 300 more foster families, the City of Philadelphia relied on a policy like the Equality Act to shut out **Catholic Social Services’** foster-care program because of the nonprofit’s commitment to placing children in homes with a married mother and father.



Washington State and the ACLU sued **Barronelle Stutzman** and her shop, Arlene’s Flowers, because she declined to create custom floral arrangements celebrating a same-sex wedding ceremony. She now faces the risk of losing nearly everything she owns.

## HARMS TO BUSINESS OWNERS

- The Equality Act could impose government punishment on small business owners, like floral artist Barronelle Stutzman and cake artist Jack Phillips, who serve everyone but can’t express every message or celebrate every event.
- It could require businesses to open up private, sex-specific spaces like locker rooms and dressing rooms to members of the opposite sex, forcing female employees and customers to share these private areas with men.
- It could force business owners and employees to violate their conscience by compelling them to use pronouns based on professed identity rather than biology.
- Employers could be forced to cover puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and “sex reassignment surgery” in their healthcare plans.

## THE EQUALITY ACT CREATES VICTIMS

The Equality Act poses a devastating and unprecedented threat to religious freedom and the progress that women have made toward true equal treatment in law and culture. It doesn’t offer equality or fairness—it creates victims.