

**Bay Area Response to the Equality Act**  
**Sent to Ministry Partners on March 21, 2021**

As followers of Jesus and leaders of Bay Area Community Church, we seek to live out the principles and commands of the Bible, and to invite you, the Bay Area family our Ministry Partners, to do the same. Jesus said the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love others. We believe that one of the ways we fulfill both of those commands is to be salt and light in our world. That is, to bring the love and truth of God to our community and world. As the apostles and followers of Jesus throughout the centuries often experienced, this effort involves inviting people to step away from the brokenness of this world and towards God and His loving plan. Occasionally, this effort would call Jesus followers to publicly stand for His principles and in opposition to movements and laws which bring harm rather than good. We find ourselves at such a place today.

Currently, the U.S. Senate is considering a bill known as the “Equality Act” which has already passed in the House of Representatives and the President has promised to sign. The bill amends federal civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination for sexual orientation and gender identity. **While anti-discrimination laws on the surface may appear appropriate, this bill undermines or eliminates religion-based rights for Christian schools, organizations, individuals and the church itself. It expressly forbids the use of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993), which protects the religious exercise of individuals and institutions, as defense for living out sincerely held religious beliefs. This has sweeping implications for followers of Jesus in various professions, businesses and ministries.** For example: medical professionals may be required to perform abortions or provide transgender therapies and procedures against their own medical and religious beliefs or face significant consequences.

Furthermore, the bill would harm women and girls in a variety of ways as a result of allowing males, who identify as females, to enter all female spaces such as locker rooms, bathrooms, and shelters. The bill also paves the way for required education on transgenderism, dangerous counsel to children, and the limiting of parental rights relative to transgender therapies and surgeries.

Bay Area does not align itself with any political party. Generally, the practice of Bay Area is to teach biblical truth on moral and social issues and invite the congregation to exercise their civic privileges, without the church specifically engaging the political conversation. We chose to write to you today because of the gravity of this situation.

We affirm that all people are created in the image of God, and therefore possess inherent value (Gen 1:27). We also affirm that all people are loved by God (John 3:16). Our love is to be in accord with His, and this love involves respect, dignity, compassion, and concern. To love people we must invite them, with all kindness, to embrace the ways of God, because we believe that His ways are in fact best for them. Love also calls us to protect people from harm.

Therefore, we urge you to take the following steps immediately:

1. Educate yourself further on the bill and its implications. Some resources are available [here](#).

- [Video Statement of Lancaster Bible College & Capital Seminary President](#)
- [ACSI & AACS Joint Statement Regarding the Equality Act](#) (Association of Christian Schools International & American Association of Christian Schools)
- Alliance Defending Freedom - [Four Reasons for Parents to Be Wary of the "Equality Act"](#)
- [All for Freedom](#)
- [Equality Act Bill](#) (Congress web page)

2. Take Action

- a. Pray for our leaders, and for God to move in hearts and minds to lead our country back to Him and His ways.
- b. This week, contact your U.S. senators and voice your opposition to the bill. Find out how to contact them [here](#).

In closing, remembering that we are first citizens of the Kingdom of God and secondarily of the U.S., we want to remind ourselves that regardless of the decisions of our government, our trust is in our sovereign and faithful Lord.

**On Behalf of the Elder Board**