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April 25, 2021

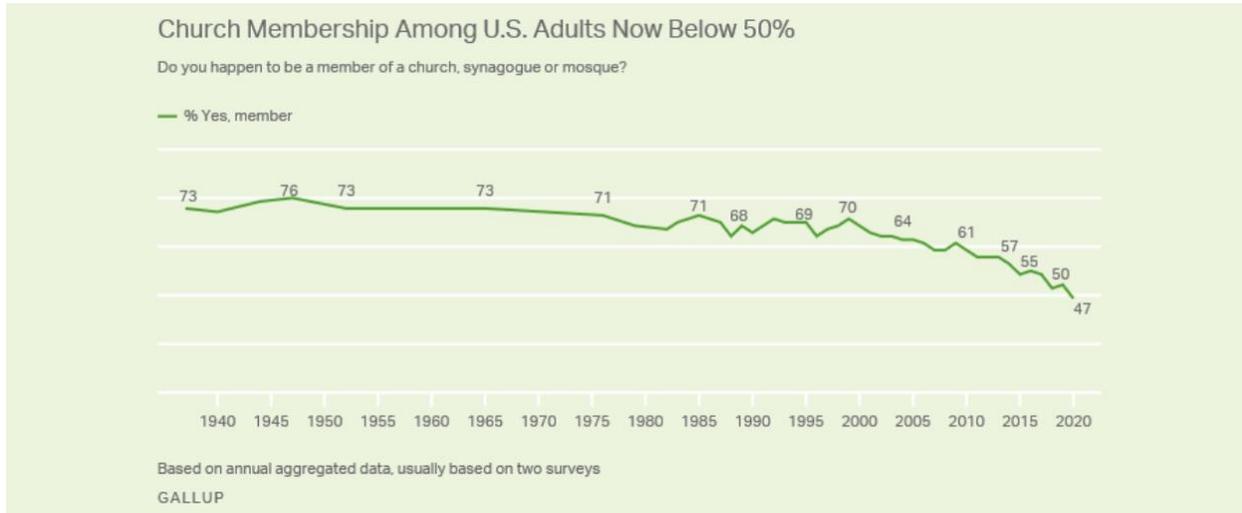
Florida Georgia District-LCMS
Attn.: Dr. Gregory S. Walton, President
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd. Suite 500
Orlando, FL 32822

RE: Equality Act (H.R.5)

Dear President Walton:

Christianity remains under attack with the so-called *Equality Act* which passed the U.S. House of Representatives by, in large part, party lines in February 2021. If God's people do not raise our voices in opposition to this Act and this Bill passes the U.S. Senate, Christianity as we practice it today may be a thing of the past.

According to a recent Gallop Poll, *Americans' membership in houses of worship continued to decline last year, dropping below 50% for the first time in Gallup's eight-decade trend. In 2020, 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque, down from 50% in 2018 and 70% in 1999.* The chart below should serve as a slap of cold water in the faces of all Christians.



As horrible as these statistics are, imagine what this poll would look like if the Church were **prohibited** from preaching the truth of Scriptures? Here are just a few glaring points of contention as spelled out in the Act.

The Act seeks to mainstream the secular view of marriage (anything goes) and biological facts about the differences in the sexes (you are the sex you identify with) to name a few. Failure to conform to the standardization of these new rules could result in civil and/or criminal penalties. Why? Because the Act seeks to make such belief in Scripture as an act of discrimination. In essence, the *Equality Act* politicizes the delivery of medicine and education and seeks to demolish existing civil rights and constitutional freedoms. Here are a few of the highlight that should concern every person of faith.

William R. Huseman, P.A.

1. Faith-based organizations would be forced to violate their belief that every child deserves a mother and a father. Section 2(a)(2) of the bill refers to the belief that marriage is between a man and a woman in nothing more than a “sex stereotype.” Gender-identity policies will allow biological males to be permitted to participate in female-only activities. In sports, the physical bodies of biological males (even after two years on estrogen) put them at an obvious unfair advantage over female athletes, who are losing out on opportunities and scholarships designed for girls and women.

2. The Act opens the door to taxpayer funding for elective abortions, which the vast majority of Americans oppose. The bill does not contain any conscience protections for those with moral or religious objections to paying for or performing abortions.

3. All single-sex spaces (locker rooms, single sex bathrooms, etc.) will be open to both sexes under the Equality Act. Giving people blanket permission to enter private spaces for the opposite sex this enabling sexual predators to exploit the rule and gain easy access to victims. The Act could pave the way for K–12 federal courts to require sexual orientation and gender-identity curricula. Of course, all of these events would have detrimental and potentially catastrophic impacts on our schools and early learning centers.

4. The *Equality Act* also aims to limit faith-based exemptions to nondiscrimination policy. Although it might leave in place the religious exemptions written into existing civil rights laws, it would prevent faith groups from using the **Religious Freedom Restoration Act** to fight for additional adjustments or defend themselves from discrimination-related lawsuits. The Act reads in pertinent part, “*The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 shall not provide ... a basis for challenging the application or enforcement*” of this law.

Some political talking heads have suggested that this Act has very little chance of passage in the Senate because the Senate can invoke the filibuster. While this may be true today, President Biden endorsed the idea of implementing a “talking” filibuster in the U.S. Senate. This would mean that senators would need to physically talk for hours in the Senate chamber to try to stop a vote on a bill. However, the Democratic party has expressed concern that this would result in even more gridlock (if that is even possible) and are seeking to remove the filibuster altogether. Regardless of which political isle you are affiliated with, removing this safe guard will mean unfettered legislative passage for the party in charge. In that event, the Senate vote by those Senators who oppose the *Equality Act* would become moot. We need to unify and stand firm against this Act.

The Church and each believer should reach out to their respective Senators letting them know of their opposition to the passage of this Bill. Believe it or not, hearing from their constituents is very persuasive for most elective officials. Especially if the elected official knows the voice also votes and passage of such a bill could result if their loss of a Senate seat. Below is the contact information for each of our Elected U.S. Senators for the District.

FLORIDA:

Marco Rubio (R)
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-3521

Rick Scott (R)
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-5274

GEORGIA:

Jon Ossoff (D)
825 B&C Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-3521

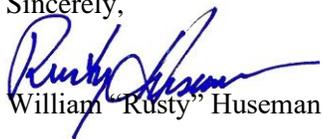
Raphael G. Warnock (D)
B40D Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-3643

What makes this Country great are the protections we enjoy under the U.S. Constitution (freedom of speech and religious expression). If passed, this Act will have an eroding and everlasting effect on this

all-important document and the principals for which it was created. Moreover, the Act's passage could force Christians and other faith-based people underground.

We should encourage each member of our faith community to contact these Senators NOW with their protests while we still have a voice to oppose such legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rusty Huseman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William "Rusty" Huseman

WRH:kh