

Diocese of Austin

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Office of the Bishop

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To the Faithful of the Diocese of Austin:

I join my brother bishops and the many leaders of other religious faiths in opposing the [Equality Act \(H. R. 5\)](#). This legislation further erodes the freedom and rights of people of good will, as well as the rights of faith-based charities and healthcare workers with conscience objections.

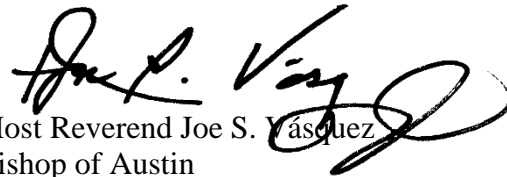
The Church boldly proclaims that we are created in the image and likeness of God. With that, we possess an inestimable human dignity flowing from God's divinity that must be acknowledged and respected. While the Church holds that all persons must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity, this legislation significantly contradicts the broader principles of religious liberty and the precious rights to life and conscience.

I invite you to read the full [statement](#) of the chairmen of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committees on Religious Liberty, Pro-Life Activities, Marriage, Catholic Education, and the Subcommittee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. Within the statement there is a link to a letter sent to Congress by the bishops expressing their opposition to the legislation warning that it poses legal and social threats to the populace.

You can help by taking action now! Go [here](#) to tell your elected officials to oppose it!

Please join me in asking for the intercession of St. Joseph, patron of the Universal Church, that God will infuse our civil leaders with wisdom and holiness.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez
Bishop of Austin