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Catholic Medical Association Urges Lawmakers, Catholics to Oppose “The Equality Act”

PHILADELPHIA, PA– April 15, 2019 –The Catholic Medical Association, along with the Catholic Bishops of the United States, opposes The Equality Act and is calling on lawmakers to do the same. Concern has been raised with this Act in regard to conscience rights and the need for ongoing public discussion of the issues raised within it.

CMA President, Dr. John Schirger, expressed his concern that any piece of legislation must respect the conscience rights of health care providers.

“The rights of conscience and religious freedom are integral to each person’s dignity. This is clearly taught by the Second Vatican Council and emphasized by St. John Paul II, who further reiterated that conscience must be allowed to seek the truth of a question, thus necessarily allowing for open public discourse,” said Dr. Schirger.

“Pope Francis, speaking recently in Morocco, reminds us that ‘...freedom of conscience and religious freedom – which is not limited to freedom of worship alone, but allows all to live in accordance with their religious convictions – are inseparably linked to human dignity.’ In this context, the CMA continues to uphold the importance for conscience protection for healthcare providers in accord with their personal dignity.”

With respect to medicine, the CMA believes the passage of the bill would violate the quality of healthcare provided to patients, as well as the conscience rights of healthcare professionals everywhere.

The DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society, commenting on the notion that The Equality Act would make *sexual orientation* and *gender identity* (as defined in the bill) protected classes under the United States Civil Rights Act, explained in an April 2nd letter (sent on behalf of concerned physicians) to the House Judiciary Committee, “This bill would effectively mandate that all health care professionals and providers perform and pay for controversial transition-affirming therapies against their best medical judgment.”

In addition to concerns regarding conscience rights, The CMA believes the controversial and complex issues addressed in The Equality Act must be thoroughly discussed among the medical community before any vote can be taken.

“Health care professionals need to use biological identity as a basis for treating over hundreds of sex-linked disorders, otherwise, poor care would result,” said Dr. Lester Ruppertsberger of the CMA.

“Doctors are obligated to treat patients based on their genetic make-up, the presence of reproductive organs and diseases unique to biological gender. Changing pronouns will not and cannot change this obligation,” said Dr. Greg Burke, Co-Chair of CMA’s Ethics Committee.

Furthermore, the CMA is especially concerned regarding the lack of studies indicating the long-term effects of these treatments. In no other area of science would these types of surgeries and treatments move forward without the research to back it up.

“The CMA has always favored sound medical science and ignoring biology would do a great disservice to the medical profession,” Dr. Burke added.

The CMA encourages concerned health care professionals, citizens, and Catholics everywhere to contact the lawmakers in their states and express opposition to The Equality Act.

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