

Dear Subcommittee Members,

Help or Harm. That is the fundamental question we must ask when considering Senate File 418. Does this bill help Iowans by simplifying legal definitions and ensuring fairness, or does it harm Iowans by creating unnecessary government restrictions, increasing bureaucracy, and interfering with personal and business decisions?

The role of legislation is to solve problems, reduce government overreach, and support economic and personal freedom. Before moving forward with SF 418, I encourage careful consideration of how this bill helps Iowans and where it may create unintended consequences.

How SF 418 May Help Iowans:

1. Standardized Definitions in Law

- The bill establishes clear statutory definitions of sex and gender, which some may argue reduce legal ambiguity and ensure consistency across Iowa law.

2. Privacy & Safety Considerations

- SF 418 maintains sex-based distinctions in public facilities like restrooms, shelters, and locker rooms, reinforcing the idea that separate accommodations do not mean unequal treatment.

3. Simplified Data Collection

- Public agencies would be required to categorize individuals strictly as male or female, ensuring uniformity in reporting for public health, crime statistics, and economic data.

How SF 418 May Harm Iowans:

1. Government Overreach & Bureaucratic Burdens

- This bill mandates how Iowans must be recorded on official documents, potentially limiting individual freedoms and creating unnecessary legal conflicts for those who already have updated documents.
- Individuals who have previously updated their birth certificates, driver's licenses, or other state documents may now face legal confusion, costly corrections, and additional government red tape.

2. Legal & Economic Consequences

- Potential legal conflicts with federal law could lead to lawsuits against the state, costing taxpayers money in litigation.
- Businesses looking to expand in Iowa may reconsider investment if state policies increase legal liabilities or restrict hiring flexibility.
- Other states that have passed similar laws have faced significant economic losses:

- North Carolina’s House Bill 2 (HB2) resulted in \$3.76 billion in projected economic losses, with major companies such as PayPal and Deutsche Bank canceling expansion plans. The NBA moved the 2017 All-Star Game out of Charlotte, and the NCAA relocated championship events. [[AP News](#)]
- Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) led to more than \$60 million in lost convention revenue for Indianapolis alone, with a reported \$250 million economic impact statewide. [[Visit Indy](#)]
- These cases show that similar policies have led to real financial harm, affecting jobs, tourism, and economic growth.

### 3. Increased Restrictions & Legal Risks for Schools

- SF 418 creates uncertainty for teachers by restricting what topics can be discussed without clear guidelines. This could expose schools to legal challenges over common classroom discussions.
- A single parent complaint about an offhand classroom discussion could result in a school district being forced to defend itself in court, draining taxpayer dollars meant for education.
- Iowa already faces teacher shortages—adding legal risks and restrictions on classroom discussion will only drive more educators away, making it harder to fill positions and maintain quality schools.

### 4. Unintended Impact on All Students

- SF 418 assumes students will not discuss identity issues among themselves, which is unrealistic. Children ask questions.
- Banning open, age-appropriate discussions in school doesn’t mean students won’t talk about these topics—it only means they’ll turn to social media, peers, or unreliable sources instead of having trusted educators available for guidance.
- Censorship in classrooms does not stop curiosity—it just limits the ability of teachers to provide factual, thoughtful responses.
- Schools should equip students with critical thinking skills, not restrict what topics they are allowed to engage with.

### 5. All Iowans Could Be Vulnerable to Discrimination

- By removing legal protections, this bill does not just impact one group—it leaves any Iowan vulnerable to discrimination based on assumptions or perceived identity.
- A person does not have to identify as transgender to be refused service, employment, or housing under this bill—they only need to be perceived as different by an employer, landlord, or business owner.
- For example:

- A woman with short hair and masculine clothing could be denied service because someone assumes she does not conform to traditional gender norms.
  - A man with long hair or soft features could be harassed at work or refused a promotion under the assumption that he does not fit a "male appearance" standard.
  - A teenager questioning their identity could be denied school services, creating an educational barrier for a child simply trying to navigate life.
- Iowa has long stood against discrimination in all forms—this bill opens the door to widespread misapplication that could affect people far beyond its intended scope.

### Why This Matters for Iowa's Schools

Teachers should not be put in the impossible position of avoiding natural student questions, fearing lawsuits over common discussions, or abandoning their ability to teach students how to think critically.

Iowa schools should be focused on preparing students for the real world, not micromanaging conversations. This bill takes local control away from parents, school boards, and teachers, increasing legal risks and government overreach where it is not needed.

### A Call for Practical Solutions

At its core, this bill is not just about terminology, it's about government control over personal and business decisions. If SF 418 is truly intended to help Iowans, we must ask: who benefits, and at what cost? If the bill creates confusion, increases legal and bureaucratic burdens, and reduces Iowa's economic competitiveness, then we must ask whether the benefits outweigh the risks.

Rather than advancing one-size-fits-all mandates, I urge you to consider policies that prioritize individual freedoms, reduce government interference, and allow businesses, local governments, and families to make decisions that best serve their needs.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to policies that promote prosperity, efficiency, and fairness for all Iowans.

Sincerely,  
Justin Conrad  
Ames, Iowa