

Comment Report

HSB 67

A bill for an act providing that political ideology is a protected class under the Iowa civil rights Act of 1965.

Subcommittee Members: Holt-CH, Wheeler, Wolfe

Date: 01/27/2021

Time: 01:00 PM

Location: RM 19

Name: Bethany Steichen

Comment: I fully support this bill. With the political climate in our country at the current moment, and the massive political divide I believe this is a wonderful idea to protect ALL sides of the political spectrum from discrimination! I don't think it should matter what side of the political spectrum you are on, you shouldn't be discriminated against for it!

Name: Brooke Lovelace

Comment: As a longtime advocate for people with disabilities, I am against this bill. I do recognize the political divide our state and country is currently experiencing but I do not believe a persons particular political ideology has resulted in the type of historical and ongoing discrimination people with disabilities and other protected classes have faced and continue to face.

Name: Pete McRoberts

Comment: The First Amendment rights of political speech and association protect people from government regulations based on ideology or political positions. This is critical: the government must always support and defend this core foundational civil liberty for people, no matter who they are or what they believe. The Iowa Civil Rights Act serves a different purpose, and results from a different, yet crucially important need. The effectiveness of ICRA is in its scope and purpose: it exists to protect historically marginalized people from longstanding histories of discrimination in public and some private settings. While the First Amendment protects all political speech and association, whether by people in power or not, ICRA is there to help people whose own political expression and power is by definition insufficient to protect their rights. The functionality and legal mechanisms within ICRA and the Iowa Code were developed and are enforced specifically to meet this critical need for people. These protections are separate in methods and in scope from the First Amendment provisions of free speech and political association. Both are essential components of how we protect peoples rights. But, they are substantively different. These distinctions do not mean that ICRA and the First Amendment are somehow in competition with each other. Rather, it means that we should protect both, for what they each do for people. So, we appreciate the intent here, because we fervently believe that the government must protect an individuals right to think and speak politically in the manner of their choosing. While we are unable to support the proposal relating to ICRA, we are grateful to see Legislators publicly recommit to the historic Iowan and American ideals of political expression, free from government intrusion. That is a point on which we can all proudly agree.