

I am the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa, and the spiritual leader of Christian congregations across the state of Iowa. It is because I am a disciple of Jesus Christ that I am opposed to this bill.

Jesus taught his disciples to love God and to love their neighbors. In both the gospel of Matthew (7:12) and the gospel of Luke (6:31), Jesus told them “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” In the gospel of Matthew (25:40), Jesus said “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

This bill legalizes discrimination against transgender Iowans. Legal discrimination against *any* class of people is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ and contrary to the promise of our great country. Every Iowan should have equal access to housing, employment, credit, education, and public accommodation.

Transgender Iowans are members of my congregations and members of communities across the state of Iowa. They are your neighbors and my neighbors. Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves. It is unthinkable to remove civil rights and legal protections from people that we love.

I know that as an Iowan and as an American in 2025 I am privileged to live in a country that recognizes my rights as equal with any other Iowan or American. I want my rights to be preserved, and I expect that you want your rights to be preserved as well. As Jesus calls us to do to others as we would have them do to us, we are bound to preserve the rights of transgender Iowans and of all Iowans, now and into the future.

Every human being is a beloved child of God. That includes every transgender person along with each one of you. As marginalized people in our society, transgender Iowans are among the “least of these members of my family” that Jesus was talking about. If Iowa removes civil rights protections from transgender Iowans, Iowa does the same to Jesus.

The work of a legislator is difficult, and I know that there are many pressures on you. Some of those pressures come from individuals or groups who would like to see transgender Iowans erased from the Iowa Civil Rights Act and the Iowa Code. Please do not give in to the pressure to love only some of your neighbors, instead of all of them. The Golden Rule applies to transgender Iowans just as it applies to you and to me. Please defeat this bill today.

You and the rest of the Iowa State Legislature are in my prayers during this legislative session.