

Massachusetts Law Attacks People of Faith

Massachusetts passed a civil rights law which could put people of faith in jail for following their sincerely-held religious beliefs. The law criminalizes discrimination against certain protected classes in public places.

One of the protected groups is transgender people. That means Massachusetts could put a pastor in jail for telling his congregation to use only the bathroom of their biological gender. The law did not specifically cite churches or people of faith, but it is easy to see how religious people will be targeted.

That is why the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination released a document to address the implications of the new law. It said, "Even a church could be seen as a place of public accommodation if it holds a secular event that is open to the general public ... All persons, regardless of gender identity, shall have the right to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of any place of public accommodation."

This Commission does not seem to understand how churches operate. The vast majority of churches are always "open to the general public." These churches' primary mission is to reach out to their community with the gospel message.

This law will also affect all church outreach ministries, including soup kitchens, homeless shelters and community centers. Christians should not be forced to comply with a standard that violates their religious beliefs and sense of decency.

In the eyes of many Americans, transgenderism should not be a protected class. Unlike ethnicity, sex or nationality,

transgenderism is not based on a tangible, unchangeable difference between people. The state of Massachusetts should be concerned about protecting innocent, churchgoing women and girls, not confused men who claim to be women.

Churches have an obligation to protect their members from dangerous predators. There have been many cases in recent weeks where men have taken advantage of transgender bathroom policies to prey on women and girls. No person of faith should be threatened with a month in jail for living by his sincerely held religious beliefs or for caring about the safety of women and young girls. {eoa}

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