



To: Judiciary Committee
From: Marion Miner, Associate Director for Pro-Life & Family Policy
Nebraska Catholic Conference
Subject: LB 229 (SOGI Hate Crim Penalty Enhancement) (Oppose)
Date: February 24, 2021

Chairman Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Marion Miner (M-A-R-I-O-N M-I-N-E-R) and I am the Associate Director for Pro-Life & Family Policy at the Nebraska Catholic Conference, which advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church and advances the Gospel of Life through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public.

The Catholic faith recognizes the supreme dignity of every person as made in the image and likeness of God. The only appropriate response to this reality is charity. For this reason, the Catholic faith also recognizes that no one, including those who are experiencing same-sex attraction or questions about their own gender identity, should be subject to violence or unjust discrimination. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* addresses this directly in paragraphs 2357 to 2359. Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity. And any act that violates charity and justice, including criminal acts, should be categorically condemned.

The Conference's opposition to LB 229 is centered on the bill's attempt to incorporate a problematic definition into state law.

LB 229 seeks to import a definition of 'gender identity' that undermines the biological and given reality of sexual difference—in short, the reality of the body—in favor of a definition that regards only the will. As Pope Francis noted about what he has called "the ideology of gender" in his 2016 Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* and in several of his public speeches, "It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality." This aspect of reality is not a mere theological rumination for people of faith, but a basic building block of any flourishing society, and any policy that undermines it should be assiduously resisted.

The Nebraska Catholic Conference respectfully urges your opposition to this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration of our position.