



To: Judiciary Committee
From: Tom Venzor, Executive Director
Nebraska Catholic Conference
Subject: LB504 (Gender Identity & Enhanced Penalties) (Oppose)
Date: February 7, 2019

Chairman Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The Nebraska Catholic Conference 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 nobody, including those who are experiencing same-sex attraction or gender identity issues, should be subject to unjust discrimination.¹ In other words, everyone should be treated with respect and dignity. And any such activity, most especially criminal activity, that violates charity and justice, should be categorically condemned.

While there are elements of LB504 that seek to address the unjust discrimination that some have experienced with regard to their human sexuality, the legislation seeks to incorporate a problematic definition into state law.

LB504 seeks to import a definition of 'gender identity' that undermine the biological and given reality of sexual difference. In doing so, as Pope Francis has noted about gender theory, these types of "legislative enactments promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female."² As the Pope further notes: "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."³ These realities are not mere theological ruminations for people of faith, but are the necessary basis and building blocks of any society that seeks to flourish.

The Nebraska Catholic Conference respectfully urges your opposition for this legislation. I would request that this letter be made part of the public record.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our position.

¹ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 2357-2359.

² Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, paragraph 56 (March 19, 2016).

³ *ibid.*