

**BACKGROUND:** Cities, counties and states around the country are being urged by homosexual activist groups to pass so-called “Human Rights Ordinances.” (Also known as non-discrimination ordinances or “competitive workforce acts”) These laws amend existing Civil Rights laws by creating new categories for sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGI) and adding them to the existing protected classes of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. These new SOGI laws are not needed and create major problems in two areas. First, they are used to violate religious liberty and free speech for Christians who are acting out their faith in employment decisions and in small businesses. Second, they create confusion regarding gender separated facilities threatening the privacy, safety and security of women in the use of showers, locker rooms & bathrooms when fully biological men who subjectively “feel” like a woman use woman’s facilities arguing their transgendered.

## **Eight Reasons to Oppose Laws Which Create New Protected Classes for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression:**

- 1) Adding Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression (SOGI) to the existing Civil Right laws create a whole web of problems that have been seen in other states and cities where similar laws have been passed.
- 2) SOGI laws create a real threat to our constitutional rights and personal liberty such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association.
- 3) SOGI laws create a new weapon to punish Christians who are simply living out their faith in small businesses and in public. Most commonly punishment this occurs when a business declines to participate in a same-sex marriage ceremony.
- 4) If a female front desk receptionist of a church or business decides to have a sex change or decides to cross-dress as a man, then an employer who fires that receptionist would be slapped with a “discrimination” complaint being filed against the church or business.
- 5) SOGI laws create a new cause of action or lawsuit that can be brought against small business owners and employers penalizing with tens of thousands of dollars in fines & attorney’s fees.
- 6) Adding gender identity and gender expression (SOGI) as new a protected classes allows men the right to unrestricted access to women’s showers, locker rooms and bathrooms in public places such as the YMCA, public gyms and fitness centers, youth and adult sports clubs, and in homeless / domestic violence shelters. This is happening around the country today.
- 7) There is no evidence that passing SOGI laws stimulate local or state economies or re-vitalize downtown areas or make cities or counties more “competitive” economically. Those arguing for SOGI laws have presented no evidence that by passing it, this will enhance the city’s economy or bring “the best and the brightest” workers to stimulate the economy. Richard Florida’s so-called “creative class theory” has been debunked by leading economists.
- 8) Those arguing for SOGI laws have presented little to no evidence of a proof or pattern of discrimination against gay-identified and transgendered persons.

**Florida Family Policy Council**

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