

... as a House of State House

Transgender Rights & Hate Crimes Bill H 1728

The purpose of the civil authority is "the care of the common good in the temporal order", to promote and safeguard the whole order of rights and freedoms which are proper to the human person as such, that enable a person to reach a fuller measure of perfection with greater ease. The first amendment to the U.S. Constitution "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, ..." recognizes that religious belief, and the practice of one's religious beliefs, is a fundamental right of the human person; that it is constituent to the human good and therefore to the common good of society. It further guarantees to the American citizen immunity from all coercion by the government in matters religious.

That our founding fathers were inspired by religious faith and that they esteemed the practice of religion in society to be a social virtue is evident in President George Washington's farewell address "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." Our first president realized that man and woman are by nature moral beings, endowed with the freedom and intelligence of knowing and living in accord with the truth. He knew from the hardships of war that human dignity is raised or lowered depending on the moral quality of one's decisions and actions in life. He also knew that the basis of moral principle is religion and that religious values were meant to influence and shape the mores and manners of society.

The Judeo-Christian values embraced by our founding fathers are seen in specific days designated for fasting, prayer and thanksgiving to God for the nation's transgressions and for God's blessings on America. These special occasions illustrate the country's awareness of its moral shortcomings and the need for repentance and prayer. It also shows the interrelationship between religion and morality, that the two are inseparable realities. Thus it is the duty and mission of religion to teach man and woman about religious truth, about their origin and destiny in God. To help them form their conscience, that inner voice in the depths of our being which passes judgment on the moral quality of our actions. And to help them discern the principles of the natural moral law inscribed in their hearts, that they may live in accord with their dignity as God's children, made in his image and likeness.

The Transgender Rights & Hate Crimes Bill H1728 is a threat to religious freedom protected by the first amendment. Chapter 272, section 98 of this Bill threatens to punish by fine, or imprisonment or both anyone "...whoever aids or incites such distinction, discrimination or restriction." As a Catholic priest I have a moral obligation and a religious duty to judge immoral those behaviors and actions which violate the natural moral law, as well as other transgressions committed against God and his Church. The Church loves the sinner but hates the sin. Thus, for the good of the faithful and for its moral edification the Church is obliged to condemn intrinsically disordered behaviors such as homo-sexual relations. Otherwise, the silence of the Church in these matters could be misunderstood as tacit consent. For it was Christ himself who said, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesars, and to God the things that are God's."

Testimony - Fr Jack Harrington
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