

Ranking Member Grassley
Hearing Questions for Dr. Edith Guffey - Responses

1. Many nonpublic parochial K-12 schools receive federal funds under the National School Lunch Program. Recently, Congress has also provided federal funds to parochial schools in COVID-19 relief packages. In supporting the Equality Act, do you mean to take school lunch money away from hundreds of thousands of financially needy kids who attend religious schools? If that's not the bill's intent, then why not make it explicit in the legislative text of the Equality Act?

As stated in both my written and oral testimony during the hearing, my participation as an individual citizen witness in support of The Equality Act was primarily as the mother of two children, one who identifies as a trans nonbinary person, and also as a person of faith. Questions related to policy would best be addressed by the policy professional witness supporting The Equality Act from the Human Rights Campaign.

2. What effect might the Equality Act have on students at religiously-affiliated colleges, whose family finances could make it impossible for them to attend those colleges without a Pell grant or other federal aid?

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3. What about the effect of the Equality Act on federal aid received by synagogues to protect them from acts of terrorism? Do you believe that these religious entities should no longer qualify for such federal assistance, including during the COVID-19 pandemic when some of them are struggling to survive?

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4. My understanding is that the Equality Act may create a legal framework for challenging the eligibility of religious colleges for accreditation. Do you believe that Christian colleges like Wheaton should lose their accreditation?

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Questions for Dr. Edith Guffey - Responses
Submitted by Senator Patrick Leahy
March 24, 2021

1. During the hearing, you demonstrated your deep religious faith as Conference Minister of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference United Church of Christ. You also acknowledged the fact that religion has been used as a sword against those working to protect the civil rights of women and people of color.

a. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) was never intended to apply to civil rights law. Please describe the harm that would be caused by misreading RFRA in a way that to defend civil rights violations.

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2. In your written testimony, you wrote, “without the Equality Act, the law does not fully protect me as a woman, and it does not protect my trans non-binary child”. During live testimony, opponents of the Equality Act stated that the bill only harms women and girls in actuality. One witness, in particular, noted that the flaw with the Equality Act is that “it doesn’t stop anyone from claiming they’re a woman”. Opponents of the Equality Act also argue that the bill’s passage would allow non-LGBTQ+ individuals to exploit the protections by “suddenly” identifying as a woman.

a. Is it possible for the Equality Act to support both equal rights protections for women while also effectuating change to protect LGBTQ+ individuals?

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b. Is there any evidence that would suggest that the Equality Act would extend beyond the protections granted to LGBTQ+ individuals, and generate loopholes for non-LGBTQ+ to exploit?

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