



Minnesota District Legislation Committee



Report to the MN District – June 2024

Minnesota Human Rights Act

In 2022 gender identity was included as part of sexual orientation within the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA). At the time there was still a religious exemption for sexual orientation included in that legislation. Last year the Minnesota legislature passed into law a new, separate definition of gender identity which contained no corresponding religious exemption. This spring a motion to amend the law to include a religious exemption was initially voted down in the Minnesota legislature. Thankfully, the amendment to restore the religious exemption was brought up for another vote later in the session and passed. It was also signed into law by the Governor.

Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution

The Equal Rights Amendment is a proposed amendment to the Minnesota Constitution that would ensure that “equal rights” shall not be abridged or denied on the basis of “gender identity or expression.” It also includes protection of a woman’s right to abortion up to the moment of a baby’s birth. Thankfully this proposed amendment failed to pass the Minnesota Legislature.

Assisted Suicide Bill

In the current session a bill has been introduced in the Minnesota legislature that would legalize physician-assisted suicide. The bill would allow doctors to prescribe a lethal dose of medication for patients to take if they have received a diagnosis of six months to live. Doctors would be allowed to prescribe the lethal dose of medication but not directly administer it. This bill also failed to pass in the recent legislative session.

New Teacher Licensing Standards Update

Previously it was reported that new standards for teacher licensure were approved by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) and were set to go into effect on July 1, 2024. The new standards required candidates to demonstrate from their coursework their ability to:

- “affirm” student identities, including sex and gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation and “incorporate” them into a learning environment
- “understand” how “ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, deficit-based teaching, and white supremacy undermine pedagogical equity”
- “assess” their “biases” and “mitigate their own behavior to disrupt oppressive systems”
- “empower” learners “to be agents of social change to promote equity”

In response to this language, the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE), which includes representatives from many faith-based colleges, held several meetings with the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). The meetings resulted in the change of verbiage from “foster,” “affirm,” and “incorporate” to “understands.”

Respectfully submitted,

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