

ACTION NEEDED FROM PEOPLE OF FAITH:

Write a Letter to the Editor of Your Paper!

Did you know letters to the editor are one of the most read sections of a newspaper? What a great way to get out our message as we defend Texas against discrimination. Using the four easy steps outlined below, we can send hundreds of letters to the editor to newspapers all across the state.

As people of faith we have been taught through our traditions, sacred text, and worship the values of love, welcome, inclusion, and non-judgment. We know that treating some differently because of who they are and who they love is wrong. But too often an inaccurate story is told that people of faith, especially Christians, are “anti-gay.”

We can help change this perception and bear witness to our faith and values. One way to do this is with letters to the editor. These worksheets will help you and your friends, family, and fellow faith community members write letters to the editor that will help share our convictions against discrimination.

STEP 1: Pick 1 or 2 of the talking points below to write about.

- Treating people differently because of who they are causes tremendous harm and unforeseen consequences to them. As people of faith, we believe in the common good of treating people as we want to be treated. We believe that treating people differently, simply because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is fundamentally wrong. This discrimination, for any reason, is counter to who we are and the values we share.
- Gay and Transgender people are our friends, neighbors, work with us, worship with us, and are members of our family. They work hard, serve in the military, and pay taxes. When they walk into a business or a government office, they should be treated like anyone else and not be discriminated against. This is how my faith inspires me to act -- treating people with dignity and fairness.
- Business owners and service providers have the freedom of their religious beliefs just like everyone else. But businesses and services that are open to the public should be open to everyone on the same terms, including to customers who are gay and transgender
- If these bills pass, it will allow people to take advantage and claim that their religion gives them the right to ignore laws. It would mean the law no longer applies to everyone in the same way, resulting in special treatment.

NOTE: Feel free to base your letter off of language from the campaign website that relates to the message you are trying to convey--or you can put it in your own words!



Top 5 Texas Daily Newspapers

The Dallas Morning News
letterstoeditor@dallasnews.com

Houston Chronicle
viewpoints@chron.com

Fort Worth Star-Telegram
letters@star-telegram.com

San Antonio Express-News
letters@express-news.net

Austin American-Statesman
letters@statesman.com



STEP 2: Make sure your letter is between 150 - 200 words

What prompts you to write? Are you responding to an article, editorial, letter to the editor, or local event? State the date and headline. *(20 to 30 words)*

What is the “big idea” you want to convey? What are the overarching values that informs your view? *(50 to 100 words)*

What is your hope or wish for the community? What do you want people to take away from your letter? What do you want people to do? *(25 to 30 words)*

Reaffirm your commitment to vote against the discrimination measure. *(15 words)*

STEP 3: Sign the letter with your first and last name

Include your phone number and street address as well as city, state, and zip code. Only your name and city will be published.

STEP 4: Send in your letter to your local newspaper

Please copy
aubreyt@reconcilingworks.org
Or mail copy to:

*ReconcilingWorks
Attention: Aubrey Thonvold
1669 Arcade St Suite 2
Saint Paul, MN 55106*

Sample Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As a person of faith I am writing in response to the up and coming discrimination initiative Texas will be seeing in the legislative session.

My faith has taught me through its tradition, sacred text, worship, and community strong core values. Those values are love, welcome, inclusion, and non-judgment. It is because of my faith I know treating someone differently because of who they are and whom they love is wrong. Religious freedom is a fundamental part of America, which is why it is in the federal and state constitution. However, that freedom does not give a business or corporation the ability to deny good and services to someone because of who they are and whom they love.

I believe all Texans should treat one another as one would want to be treated. Faith is about loving our neighbors, not discriminating against them. I understand not everyone holds the same religious beliefs I do, however, I do know Texas is about building strong communities. Discrimination has no place in Texas. Religious freedom is not being threatened. What is being threatened is strong communities and a strong economy.

It is because of my faith I want to keep discrimination out of Texas.

Sincerely,

Sarah Smith

Dear Editor,

I recently heard about proposed legislative bills that, if passed, would allow business the right to refuse service to gay and lesbian couples. I sincerely hope that this measure does not pass, as it would appear to rewrite discrimination into our laws.

As a member of the Native community, I am personally familiar with discrimination. Businesses have been allowed to refuse to serve people based on our skin color, and as a community we have fought against that. Treating people differently based on who they are is discrimination.

We need to work now to keep our communities moving forward regardless of who they love. Discrimination doesn't belong in Texas and we have to come together to defend our state against discrimination.

Sincerely,

MIKE JOHNSON