

Karin Miller – Wife, Mother, Educator, “Faith in Action” Author – Opposed to HF 137

Dear Members of the House Rules Committee,

5/3/24

Religious freedom is **THE CORE RIGHT** of every American, guaranteed by the First Amendment, that many of our other rights stem from. In his farewell speech, George Washington referred to religion and morality as “indispensable supports.” “In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these **great pillars of human happiness**, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. **The mere politician**, equally with the pious man, **ought to respect and to cherish them.**”

Yet here we are in 2024, and the term “religion” has already been removed from the ERA. Now in this latest delete all version before you, the final word protecting freedom of belief and conscience – **CREED** – is about to be stripped away. (S0037DE3-2 [a5m1W-DI06AI2D6LmDo9Q.pdf](#)).

How can we possibly hope to achieve equal rights for all our treatment for one another is not rooted in a deep respect for each person’s foundational right to freedom of religion!?

Striking “religion” and “creed” from the ERA is essentially deleting the First Amendment to the constitution. Without those words, Minnesotans have NO protection from discrimination when it comes to their personally held convictions.

This is antithetical to everything America was founded on.

Furthermore, this language is no more about equal rights, but it is becoming about unbalanced rights. The Senate version of the bill includes “sexual orientation” and “gender identity or expression.” The proposed House version also adds “pregnancy”, which will encompass “making and effectuating decisions about all matters relating to one’s own pregnancy or decision whether to become or remain pregnant.” This language would enshrine the right to abortion in our State Constitution.

All of these issues related to sexuality, gender, reproduction, and life are ones that religious people hold very firm conscientious views on. Deleting “creed” will leave them defenseless.

As written the language of the proposed ERA is a violation of the First Amendment establishment clause, which reads, **“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”**

If you strip all language protecting religious freedom, then you are establishing a government religion to which everyone must adhere. That is NOT freedom, that is NOT American, that is NOT equality for all. That is bondage and tyranny.

As Washington concluded, no “sincere friend” of America can “look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric” and remain silent.

Vote NO. Restore language to protect religious liberty in the ERA. Protect true liberty for all.