

COVENANT CONVERSATION: NEBRASKA

Bearing Faithful Witness: Advocating and Caring for Those affected by Negative Legislative Outcomes

Two recent Federal Supreme Court decisions:

June 2023: Counterman v. Colorado ("True Threat", stalking)

June 2023: 303 Creative LLC v. Elenis (anti-discrimination, free speech)

ACLU is tracking 500+ anti-LGBTQ+ bills in the United States.

Anti-LGBTQ+ bills on the state level (Spring 2023):

LB277 - "First Freedom Act" allows discrimination based on religion

LB810 - "Medical Ethics and Diversity Act" allows medical personnel and payers to refuse to treat for 'ethical, moral or religious' reasons

LB575 - "Sports and Spaces Act" bans transgender youth from sports and locker rooms they feel comfortable in

LB371 - Criminalizes drag shows and transgender performers

LB574 - "Let Them Grow Act" bans families from seeking and receiving gender affirming medical care by punishing doctors who provide care

Community and municipal levels:

Norfolk Public schools approves discriminatory anti-trans sports policy

Plattsmouth Public Schools book ban - racism, LGBTQ+, substance abuse

- LB374 - Allows parents to pull books, students to opt out
- Papillion-LaVista, Wauneta, Kearney, etc. reviewing several challenged books

Rescinded revision of Lincoln's fairness ordinance that includes LGBTQ+ folks

Hate speech on the internet is increasingly sharply

Effects on the LGBTQ+ Community:

Marked increase in anxiety, depression, and suicide

Re-closeting

Moving out of state

LGBTQ+ lives under a microscope, no anonymity

Increased socio-economic marginalization due to lack of consequences for discrimination

Decrease in mental health and public health resources for LGBTQ+ folks

- New DHHS director (mental illness)
- Governor (Lucifer)

COVENANT CONVERSATION: NEBRASKA

Bearing Faithful Witness: Advocating and Caring for Those affected by Negative Legislative Outcomes

1. What are the greatest threats to the LGBTQ+ community? What are their greatest needs?

2. How can my faith community be an ally and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community? What needs to change in my church?

3. What can I personally do to be an ally and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community? What can I say to friends and neighbors?

Sarah and Emily conversation:

1. Introductions
2. Why is it important for faith communities to welcome LGBTQ+ folks?
3. What if that church doesn't have any members who identify as LGBTQ+?
4. How do we create belonging?
5. Let's talk about community care for a moment, how does that contribute to the well-being of LGBTQ+ church members, current and future?
6. How do we convert 'thoughts and prayers' into action?