



New York's "Equal Rights" Constitutional Amendment: Be Informed and Vote!

Homeschool New York exists as an organization primarily for the support and advocacy of home education, according to the scriptural design found in passages such as Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 22:6, and Ephesians 6:4. We are not a church nor are we a political lobbying organization. However, there are times we need to bring attention to political situations that have the potential to interfere with our God-given right to home educate our children, and the vote for this proposed amendment is one of those times.

This year, Election Day is Nov 5. It falls 5 days after the 507th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. It seems appropriate to ponder what the great reformer had to say about a Christian's responsibility in the civil realm, or what he referred to as the "left-handed kingdom." As Christians we are called to live in and serve in both that kingdom and the "right-handed kingdom" – i.e. the Church. Sometimes Christians are reluctant to get involved in the left-handed kingdom, but Luther points us to God's Word where our obligations to the State are made clear in passages like Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:5-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; Titus 3:1; and 1 Peter 2:13-14. Part of our calling is to engage in the processes of politics and government. And one way to do that is to educate ourselves on issues that impact us locally, in our state, and in our nation.

In that spirit we want to bring to your attention the proposed amendment to the New York State Constitution called the "Equal Rights Amendment" or "Proposal One". New York's Constitution currently bans discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed or religion; Prop One would add many new protected categories: ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes and reproductive health care.

While this may sound like a natural expansion of the existing protected categories, enshrining them in our constitution could (and most likely will) launch two major onslaughts, one of new legislation and the other of new lawsuits. Both will likely be aimed at religious and other ideological organizations (like Homeschool New York), forcing them to accept categories that they disagree with and forbidding them to speak out against them.

We are particularly concerned that Parental Rights will be severely eroded by those onslaughts, giving the State more influence in children's decisions regarding their gender, sexuality, and faith. And what will happen when over-reaching school districts and state regulators look to apply this to our right to home educate our children?

For this key reason, as well as many others, we encourage you to vote “No!” to Prop One!

Do your own prayerful research and see if you agree! Below are some good resources to get you started:

You can read the actual language of the amendment here:

- NY Board of Elections page - <https://elections.ny.gov/2024-statewide-ballot-proposal>

You can read opposition to the amendment here:

- New York Families' statement - <https://newyorkfamilies.org/2024/09/new-york-families-opposes-proposition-one/>
- Houghton University's statement - <https://www.houghton.edu/news/new-yorks-proposal-1/>

And you can read what some of the supporters of the amendment say (there's a lot to learn) here:

- NYCLU's statement - <https://www.nyclu.org/commentary/why-new-yorkers-should-vote-yes-on-proposition-1>

As Christians, another part of our “left-handed kingdom” responsibility comes from 1 Timothy 2:1-3 where we are encouraged to pray for all those in civil authority. In this election season, we can pray for candidates and for appointed officials, that “we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way”. And remember that we are also citizens of the “right-handed kingdom”, the Church, which is the eternal kingdom. We should conduct ourselves on the left hand in ways that honor the right hand.

Please share this with others in your homeschool community, your church, and your family. All voters need to go to the polls this election day, educated and prepared to exercise their civic duty!

Yours in Christ,

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