

The Social Justice Council Proposes Social Action in Three Areas In 2024

December 3, 2023

LGBTQ+

During 2023 the Iowa Legislature passed a number of bills that were signed into law by the Governor which discriminate against LGBTQ+ Iowans.

Teaching about gender identity and sexual activity are now outlawed in grades K through 6. School employees are required to immediately notify a parent if they believe a student's gender identity differs from their sex at birth. Parental consent must be obtained if a student is using a new name or pronoun. Health care professionals are prohibited in providing any kind of gender affirming care to a minor or referring the patient to another health care provider. Schools are allowed to restrict bathrooms and changing facilities to people of the same biological sex. An individual may sue a school if they must share a bathroom with someone of a different biological sex.

Reproductive Health

The Iowa Legislature passed a bill and the Governor signed a law that bans abortion after cardiac activity is detected with an abdominal ultrasound. This is usually at the 6 week mark when a woman may not even know she is pregnant. A lawsuit was immediately filed by the ACLU of Iowa and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. In July, a lower court judge granted their request to pause the law as the courts assess its constitutionality. The Reynolds Administration has now asked the Iowa Supreme Court to override the lower court's ruling and allow the fetal heartbeat law to go back into effect. Abortion in Iowa now rests on a decision by the Iowa Supreme Court. The Court has decided to review the merits of the law while the injunction remains in place.

Native Americans

The Iowa Legislature passed a bill signed into law by the Governor which prohibits public employees from teaching, advocating, instructing, or training any employee or student that: "The U.S. or Iowa is fundamentally or systemically racist or sexist." Books addressing race and ethnicity are being banned. Teaching about Native Americans and their historical oppression is already lacking. This will only intensify the problem. Our efforts to understand the historical and systemic oppression of American Indians and how we can be effective allies is only beginning.