



West Newton Friends Church

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J. Brent Bill, clerk

West Newton Friends Meeting Minute In Support of Anti-Hate/Bias Crimes Legislation

Guided by the Light of God within us and recognizing that of God in others, we can all learn to value our differences in age, sex, physique, race and culture. This enables mutual respect and self-respect to develop, and it becomes possible for everyone to love one another as God loves us. ... We have a responsibility to protect each other's self-respect....Personality, sex, race, culture and experience are God's gifts. We need one another and differences shared become enrichments, not reasons to be afraid, to dominate or condemn. We need to consider our behavior carefully, heeding the command of Jesus that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

-- Quaker Faith & Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

We, the Quakers of West Newton Friends Meeting, as followers of Jesus, in session on March 17, 2019 minute our support for a Bias Crimes Law in Indiana, specifically HB 1093. As one of only five remaining states without a Hate/Bias Crime Law, it is time that Indiana stands against violence that targets individuals and groups because of the individual's or group's real or perceived characteristic, trait, belief, practice, or association. Indiana needs to take a legal stand against allowing violence and bigotry to flourish with a law that makes bigoted violence an aggravating circumstance when imposing a criminal sentence.

We stand for the Gospel of Love preached by Jesus. We feel such legislation is needed in these times of increasing hate crimes, both in Indiana and around the world. Indiana needs, as a state, to affirm the dignity of all its citizens and stand against crimes committed as acts of bias. State statistics show that there were seventy-eight such acts in Indiana in CY 2017.

We, the members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believe that there is that of God in each person and that we are all created in God's image. As such, each citizen of this state has worth in God's eyes and ours. As followers of Jesus, Friends endeavor to "learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed" as Isaiah 1:17 (NIV) calls us to do. As part of our defending the oppressed, we call on the Indiana Legislature to pass a Hate/Bias Crimes bill that protects those persons in our state who are oppressed and which says to those who would oppress others, this type of hatred will not be tolerated. We specifically support a bill that does not contain a list of protected classes. Such lists are inherently discriminatory. We believe that we are all created equally and deserving of equal protection.

We of West Newton Friends Meeting call upon all, including our fellow Quakers as friends of Jesus, to support HB 1093.

Thank you for your attention to our support for this important legislation.