

Muscatine County



For Immediate Release Coalition Contact: Info@MuscatineEqualityCoalition.com
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Immediate Release: Muscatine Vigil for Transgender and Non-Binary Rights

The Muscatine County LGBTQIA+ Equality Coalition is hosting a Vigil for Transgender and Non-Binary Rights at Faith United Church of Christ on Friday, April 11, at 7:00pm.

“We are gathering together to stand in solidarity with transgender and non-binary Iowans as they prepare to lose many of their civil rights,” said coalition member, Jessica Brackett.

The Civil Rights Removal Act was signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds on February 28, 2025, and will go into effect on July 1, 2025. The Act removes “gender identity” as a protected characteristic in the Iowa Civil Rights Code, and redefines “male” and “female.” This marks the first time in U.S. History civil rights protections for gender identity will be rolled back.

Coalition member Thalia Sutton, who is a disability rights advocate and graduate of One Iowa’s LGBTQ Leadership Institute, said “LGBTQ+ Iowans deserve compassion, understanding, and unwavering support from their government and their neighbors, not harassment and oppression. It is time to do the most American thing we can, and make our voices heard—along with our truths. Trans people are not the enemy, nor have they ever been. But they do need your help.”

The Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 was updated in 2007 and prohibits discrimination in “employment, education, housing, credit, and public accommodations” based on “age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, and disability.”

Gender identity remains a protected characteristic in employment under Title VII, as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, although transgender and non-binary Iowans will have no protections in education, housing, credit and public accommodations, like access to restaurants, hotels and gas stations after July 1.

“As a person of faith, one of my foundational beliefs is that God created all that exists and called it good. If God sees every aspect of creation as good and worthy of love, dignity, and respect, then I, as a follower of Christ, am called to do the same. If Christianity had a tagline it would have to be ‘love your neighbor as yourself,’ and this is one way we can

love one another – by standing up for each other’s basic human rights,” said Pastor Paris White of Faith United Church of Christ.

Coalition member organizations include: Progress Muscatine, PRIDE Club (Muscatine High School), Stonewall Muscatine, Muscatine Center for Social Action (MCSA), BLEND (Bayer), All Kinds of People (Muscatine Community College), Muscatine Faith United Church of Christ, and Muscatine Freethinkers

Our Mission: Work for LGBTQIA+ equality and equity by supporting our community, uniting with our allies, and advocating for increased awareness and understanding of issues facing LGBTQIA+ people in Muscatine County.

You can learn more at www.MuscatineEqualityCoalition.com