

Impact of Self-ID Legislation on Adolescent Girls and Young Women

Girls are experiencing an epidemic of sexual harassment in schools and abuse within relationships¹ Abuse is based on the fact that girls are the female sex, not on how they identify. Sexual abuse of the female body and harassment based on the physical attributes of the female body is a form of discrimination and misogyny towards women and girls as a sex.

The ways in which discrimination against girls is further increased, and protections taken away, by policies which prioritise "gender identity" over "sex" are already evident. Self-ID legislation would inevitably consolidate and expand on existing policies based on 'gender identity'.

- Online bullying and harassment from the transgender community: rape and death threats, offensive sexualised language, and a whole new form of abuse eg. rape by a "woman" with a "lady penis"² Girls and young women are especially vulnerable to being silenced by bullying tactics.
- The erasure of language with which to describe, or even recognise, the abuse as sex-based or to recognise the perpetrators as male; the erasure of the right to name male violence.³
- The erasure of the right to expect understanding and support for this abuse as an aspect of male violence against women if it cannot be named as such.
- The pressure on young people to be "inclusive" may prevent girls from reporting abuse, for fear of being seen as transphobic and "exclusive".
- Legally ratified 'gender identity' takes away girls' right to define and talk about themselves as the female sex and denies them the language to understand themselves as biological females.⁴
- Girls grow up to believe they have no right to their own boundaries as a sex; that they must accept male bodied people in their private spaces and that the gender identity and feelings of males are more important than the biological reality of being female and the feelings of discomfort, embarrassment or fear that girls may experience.
- Girls who speak up to protect their private spaces are condemned for their ignorance and lack of understanding of transgender people, the accusation that they are right-wing/religious/prudes and their need for "re-education" - another powerful way of silencing girls and a form of victim-blaming.⁵
- The strong need for young people to be seen as "inclusive" makes it impossible for girls to demand their own spaces as a sex, or even recognise the need and the right to those spaces.
- Girls have a right to privacy, dignity and comfort in public facilities such as toilets and changing-rooms. 'Self-ID' legislation would allow any man who claims to 'identify' as a woman to access these spaces, including sex offenders on release from prison.⁶
- Girls are denied the right to female-only groups and organisations, the right to gather without the presence of males and the right to bodily privacy and normal safeguarding protocols within those organisations.⁷
- Self-ID legislation would have a huge impact on girls' sports. This is already happening in the USA as male athletes take awards and trophies that rightfully belong to girls. The impact of this will inevitably be fewer girls taking up sports.⁸

- Young lesbians are being pressured and bullied online to accept "lesbian" males as sexual partners and being accused of transphobia if they reject someone with a penis. Sexual orientation is effectively redefined as gender orientation.⁹
- Girls make up nearly 70% of overall referrals and nearly 75% of adolescent referrals to the Tavistock gender clinic, with high rates of co-existing mental health problems, depression, self-harming, suicidal ideation and past trauma¹⁰, and 35% with moderate to severe autistic traits.¹¹ Legal recognition of an inherent gender identity would support the 'affirmation' approach rather than exploration of underlying psychological problems, putting girls disproportionately at risk.

¹ <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/91.pdf>

² <https://terfisaslur.com/>

³ https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/04/12/radical-feminist-warned-refer-transgender-defendant-assault/?WT.mc_id=tmg_share_tw

⁴ See for example erasure of the word 'mother' <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4167632/Don-t-call-pregnant-patients-mothers.html> and erasure of the word 'woman' https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/cancer-research-sparks-controversy-by-removing-the-word-woman-from-its-smear-test-campaign_uk

⁵ See for example: <http://www.puckermob.com/lifestyle/an-open-letter-to-the-students-who-dont-support-lila-perry>

⁶ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/up-to-half-of-trans-inmates-may-be-sex-offenders-26rz2crhs?shareToken=c8a34dea3c57d7c0c9ca4696b07cfc49>

⁷ See for example Girlguiding UK: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/26/guides-allows-boys-identify-female-shower-girls/>

⁸ <http://insider.foxnews.com/2018/06/15/parents-petition-policy-change-after-transgender-athletes-dominate-high-school-track-meet>

⁹ See for example Stonewall's definition of homosexuality as "sexual attraction towards someone of the same *gender*" not towards someone of the same *sex* in their guide for schools (p42): https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/an_introduction_to_supporting_lgbt_young_people_-_a_guide_for_schools_2015.pdf See also Gendered Intelligence Sexual Health booklet: "Sex education generally has quite a lot of emphasis about bodies, but within the trans community we realise that it's **identity that's more important**. How you look, how you speak and how you have sex are all aspects of you, **but your identities** [sic] **paramount**. **A woman is still a woman, even if she enjoys getting blow jobs. A man is still a man, even if he likes getting penetrated vaginally.**" <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/support/trans-youth/resources>

¹⁰ <https://digest.bps.org.uk/2018/01/17/most-children-and-teens-with-gender-dysphoria-also-have-multiple-other-psychological-issues/>

¹¹ <https://adc.bmj.com/content/103/7/631.full?ijkey=HsMwyZDRtsKu83z&keytype=ref>