

Written evidence submitted by McQuaid [GRA 1666]

I am a fifty year old woman living in the UK.

I am submitting evidence to this committee because I fear that any reform of the GRA that makes it easier for a person to change their gender identity will be harmful to women's sex based rights.

Any move to "gender self ID" which allows men who have not medically transitioned to access women's single sex spaces such as prisons, hospital wards and even changing rooms and toilets is an unacceptable risk for women. There is abundant evidence that men are more violent than women and that most violence experienced by women is perpetrated by men. Transgender women have been shown to exhibit the same propensity for violence and sexual assault as all other men. I don't want to be forced to share spaces where I should have privacy with full bodied males.

The "gender ideology" that underpins gender identity is based on sex stereotypes and has led to a reduction in safeguarding in settings such as schools and hospitals. We should not enshrine such a nebulous concept as "I am what I say I am" in law.

Women have always faced discrimination on the basis of their sex. If the government adopts the position that gender identity overrides biological sex this will harm all work to reduce sexism in society. The gathering of statistics that would identify areas of continuing discrimination and need would be obscured by the fact that biological men are being counted as women.

I am also very concerned by the harm that the mantra of being "born in the wrong body" is causing to young people, especially teenage girls. Girls when they reach puberty begin to realise how difficult it can be to navigate the world as a woman. They begin to experience sexual harassment and restrictions on their behaviour and self-expression. It is not surprising that they would look for a way to avoid this, but they cannot be allowed to embark on life changing medical treatment for what is really a societal problem.

In closing I wish to reiterate that "gender identity" is a regressive and sexist ideology that should most definitely not be encoded in UK law.

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