

Written evidence submitted by Sarah Gellner [GRA1692]

I am a parent of a sometime gender-nonconforming child, an aunt to several others, and a person with a decades' long interest in women's and children's issues. I'm registering my views here as a balance to those I know you'll be getting from the trans-activist brigade. They will claim that people like me deny trans people their right to exist; they are wrong, of course. We actually hope they remain as safe and well throughout their lives as the rest of us, and get all the support they need to do so. We simply question the nature of that support, and the extent to which they can impose their personal identity onto the lived reality of others, in particular on women and girls.

I do believe that no-one can actually change their birth sex. People can change their gender, if by that we mean the appearance of sex; they can choose to conform to the expectations of behaviour and dress generally not associated with their birth sex. The problem with GRA legislation is that it does not make clear exactly what is meant by changing gender. If it means changing sex – then no, it can't be done, and we should not be pretending that it can.

The delusion that biological sex can be changed at will prays on already vulnerable people seeking relief from a variety of mental health conditions – in particular on very young people. There isn't enough statistical research in the area – but I believe it is demonstrated that 'transitioning' frequently does not solve mental health issues associated with 'gender dysphoria' or any other issue in the long term. It is not good enough to just blame 'transphobia' for the fact that transitioning often does not provide more than very temporary relief for many unfortunate people.

The implications for protected 'women only' areas of a too-easy, off-the-peg, self-ID transition into womanhood have not been sufficiently addressed. Women's sports, prisons, refuges, and support services have already been negatively affected. Teenage schoolgirls are expected to welcome male-bodied peers and even teachers into their sports teams and changing areas. Everywhere, women and children are expected to pay the price for a too-eager acceptance of transgender lobbying.

Not enough is yet known about why middle aged men and teenage girls more than any other demographic currently express a wish to transition; there are no genetic or biological indicators (for instance that a new baby is destined to be transgender) as I understand.

Until more is known both about motivations of and the long-term health of those who have transitioned, gender transitioning should not be made any easier than it is already. It's a serious business – just ask many who have been through it – and there is too much at stake when things go wrong, both for the transgender patients themselves and female people at large.

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