

Written evidence submitted by Lindsay [GSP0009]

I am a woman who has responsibilities for children and parents. I have responded to the consultation as I am worried about the erosion of existing women's rights

The consultation asks 'How successfully have changes proposed in the past been implemented to make the House of Commons more gender sensitive?'

I am concerned the statement indicates policy capture resulted in the replacement of "sex" with "gender identity" in public institutions.

There is no definition of gender provided. What actually is it? It seems to be narrow minded, sexist, insulting and demeaning stereotypes that limit. Others however define it as inexplicable, abstract and individual, with over 221 thus far

In practice replacing "sex" with "gender identity" undermines the ability of people and institutions to do their jobs, such as collecting and using data to plan public services, allocate public resources and monitor equalities outcomes, and ensuring safeguarding of children and vulnerable people. It results in grass roots organisations having to defend existing women's rights

Gender is not a replacement work for the protected characteristic of sex.

I strongly believe that the adversarial nature of the House and the language used is off putting to women. When a female MP is told to consider her tone, it demonstrates the prevailing sexist attitude in the House. It was deliberately belittling, suggesting that the male MP will only listen to women if they said something in a tone he agreed with. Whilst it was a way to distract from the difficult question, the answer of which may have made him look bad, I doubt the male MP would have made that comment to another male MP. This is the crux of the matter; the casual sexism is always remains unchallenged.

Indeed the prime minister himself described a colleague as a girly swot, I'm sure his colleague was stung by the insult that he was a girl who worked hard and it demonstrated the continuing censure of women. How was the casual thrown away remark, any different to childish insults on the playground? That it is reported without any apology once again reinforces casual sexism by some of the powerful men within the House

Then the abuse outside the House starts, Joanna Cherry and Diane Abbot are both frequent abused and it is never called out, even as a man admits the abuse in court Rosie Duffield and Jess Philips have been abused, no one stands up to say this is unacceptable. It's just normal, acceptable, tolerated and institutionalised. Why would women want to take this on?

Predatory behaviour never seems to be dealt with, unless there are other matters in play. Are the policies regarding harassment robust or does it harm your career to speak up? In general, women just vote with their feet and self exclude.

The pandemic has shown that we have to be flexible, the House can be too. This could accommodate women who have childcare responsibilities. The voting system could involve online voting.

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