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Women's Liberation Front

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Equality Act (H.R. 5)

Thank you for inviting me to speak in consideration of the Equality Act. Thank you to Chair Nadler, Vice Chair Scanlon, and Ranking Member Collins of the House Judiciary Committee for welcoming my testimony. If the Equality Act passes in its current form as HR 5, then women's rights will be abolished, and every right that women have fought for will cease to exist.

The Equality Act is a human rights violation. Every person in this country will lose our right to single sex sports, shelters, grants and loans. We will be unable to provide or deny intimate services to people of the opposite sex. We will no longer be able to distinguish between women and men.

To be clear, I do support the general goal of the Equality Act—to protect people on the basis of sex, a physical and immutable biological reality. To protect sexual orientation, which is based on biological sex. I object to the inclusion of “gender identity.”

People who call themselves transgender, nonbinary, and everything in between still deserve the same basic human rights that we all do. But treating someone as if they are a member of the opposite sex is not a civil right. In fact, this violates the rights of others.

People cannot change sex, no matter how many legal documents they alter, no matter how many dangerous surgeries they endure. This myth of changing sex has gained considerable traction, not only because of the synonymous use of the words ‘sex’ and ‘gender’, but also because trans activism is extremely well-funded, with billionaire donors and a very deep sea of lobbyists.

Sex is a vital characteristic. “Gender” and “identity” are not. Sex can never be changed, but gender changes all the time. One hundred years ago, pink was a color for boys. Now pink is a girl's color. This is an example of gender: social expectations of appearance and behavior. These expectations are based on sex stereotypes that prevent people from being their authentic selves. Unfortunately, “gender identity” forces people back into these stereotypical sex roles.

This bill defines “gender identity” as “actual or perceived gender-related characteristics.” This is a circular definition, a logical fallacy. There is no way to protect a person on the basis of their “gender identity” without a legitimate definition. Lawmakers across the country will have to consider which mannerisms, hairstyles, occupations, and clothing choices make up one “gender identity” or another. How is this any different from the sex stereotypes that women have been fighting to break free from? How is this not regressive?

The concept of gender identity suggests that there's an essentially female personality or feeling that a person can have, but no such thing as a female body. Making gender identity the law will in fact mandate a belief in a “female penis,” or “female testes.”

Deep down, I believe you have good intentions. But “gender identity” only does harm. Let me tell you what happens if HR5 passes:

- Male rapists will go to women's prisons and will likely assault female inmates, as already happened in the UK.
- Female survivors of rape will be unable to contest male presence in women's shelters.
- Men will dominate women's sports; girls who would have taken first place will be denied scholastic opportunity.
- Women who use male pronouns to talk about men may be arrested, fined, and banned from social media platforms.
- Girls will stay home from school when they have their periods to avoid harassment by boys in mixed-sex toilets.
- Girls and women will no longer have a right to ask for female medical staff or intimate care providers, including elderly or disabled women who are at serious risk of sexual abuse.
- Female security officers will no longer have the right to refuse to perform pat-down or intimate searches of males who say they're female, and women undergoing security checks will no longer have the right to refuse having those searches performed by men claiming a feminine identity.

For a good look at how lesbians are impacted by gender ideology and legislation, please read "Lesbians at Ground Zero", a survey from the UK about the harassment of lesbians in queer spaces, which is included in my written testimony. Everything I just listed is *already* happening, and it's only going to get worse if "gender identity" is recognized in federal law.

The authors of this bill have done a lot of work to make it sound like gender identity is well understood and has been around a long time. Yet it's a new concept with a circular definition that can only ever refer to stereotypes and unverifiable claims.

The witnesses for the majority will talk about medical conditions, and desperate unhappiness that everyone is surely sympathetic to. But this bill doesn't reference any medical condition, and unhappiness isn't a sex class, nor is it a reasonable category of civil rights protection. Everyone experiences unhappiness.

So I would ask the members to strike the gender identity provisions of this bill, and instead to consider protecting all forms of self-expression and loving relationships under stronger sex stereotype discrimination provisions. Sex stereotype nondiscrimination could equally cover both RuPaul and Caitlyn Jenner, in their rights to housing and employment, but only if we accurately recognize everyone's biological sex.

I thank the Republicans who invited me here, and I urge my fellow Democrats to wake up. Please acknowledge biological reality. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Julia Beck