

Submission to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (31 July 2021)

My name is Virginia Woolf and my name sake was the renown British writer who espoused feminist principles in her writing. I was born a bone fide female and am a female NZ citizen who lives here in Auckland, our largest city here in New Zealand (NZ). I am writing to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to express my very real concern about the anti women position the Jacinda Ardern-led, NZ Labour government has taken in promoting gender identity and ideology at the expense of the legal and personal rights of members of the female sex.

Women's fundamental rights to their privacy in single-sex spaces such as ablution and toilet facilities; sex-based representation, and even the language used to describe ourselves as women, are being seriously eroded, undermined and changed by the inherently misogynist thinking of gender identity ideology. Motherhood is being treated with total disrespect with the unique, biological role of mothers, as the bearers of babies, whom they breastfeed (not chestfeed) and as carers of children, being totally undermined by hostile, misogynistic transactivism.

New Zealand was the first self governing nation in the world to give women the vote in 1893. The rights for women to achieve, be recognised and be represented in all areas of life, have been hard won gains, over many years. They are now under serious threat because of the New Zealand government's agenda to elevate trans rights above those of women and give them more validity. This hierarchy of rights, detrimental to women, is being promoted through proposed draconian legislative changes to be implemented in the next few months and will have far reaching negative societal and personal implications for women and girls.

Prior to the October election last year, the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, and her Labour Members of Parliament gave absolutely no indication that they were going to implement far reaching, draconian, legislative changes over sex and gender issues such as outlawing 'Conversion Therapy' with a possible 5 year prison sentence for promoting it on the pretext that such therapy causes mental and emotional harm to those who claim the need to transition. It's outrageous that no-one, including parents, will have the right to give counselling advice, or raise any objections, as to the pros and cons of making such a life changing sex change decision.

It's imperative that young people in particular understand the consequences of such drastic action especially if later on, as they mature and develop past puberty, they realise they may have made a dreadful mistake in their sex change which for women and girls invariably means double mastectomies and a full hysterectomy. Young women overseas have gone to court over lack of proper advice given.

There is an unhealthy obsession now in NZ by the present Labour government to criminalise everything and punish generally law abiding citizens but have a soft touch with the dangerous, criminal gangs who do serious harm peddling life threatening drugs and profiting handsomely by so doing.

"Justice Minister Kris Faafoi isn't ruling out parents being criminalised if they stopped their children from taking hormone blockers in a way that is deemed to be harmful conversion therapy. Faafoi announced the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill today, to follow through with Labour's election manifesto promise to ban so-called gay conversion therapy. "This bill isn't about criminalising people. It is about making sure we prevent harm that is happening as a result of these conversion practices," Faafoi said.

Asked whether parents could be jailed if they stopped their 12-year-old children from taking hormone-blockers, Faafoi said anyone intentionally changing or suppressing someone's gender identity or sexual orientation could be breaking the law."

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/conversion-therapy-ban-justice-minister-kris-fafoi-discusses-conversion-practices-prohibition-legislation-bill/OMMZRD54XYDBSCJRPCYFXTAPY/>

There was no detailed public discussion or in-depth debate on this or any other controversial issue rather the Prime Minister, with the NZ Labour party hanging on to her coat tails, went on the campaign trail riding on the crest of the wave of her popularity over her competent handling of the Covid 19 crisis last year supported by her health advisors. Her election campaigning was short in substance over all manner of intended and far reaching changes to New Zealand society but long on emphasizing her mantra of kindness and reiterating that we were altogether as the 'team of 5 million' in dealing with Covid. Lots of handshakes, cheery smiles and chats with children pervaded the media by an articulate, astute woman skilled at communicating to draw the crowds and sweeten them but belying their real agenda.

A major area of grave concern, here in New Zealand, is an amendment soon to be made to the NZ Births, Deaths, Marriages and Relationships Act (known as the BDMMR Bill) with the proposed 'Sex self-identification legislation'. This in essence will mean that anyone can alter their sex recorded on their birth certificate via a simple statutory declaration and it will be referred to as sexual reassignment. This will adversely impact on biological women like myself (referred to as cisgender by trans activists – a term I reject) because they will no longer have the sole right to single sex spaces where they can have privacy and feel safe such as toilet facilities, changing rooms, women's only gyms, spas, retail store changing rooms, women's prisons and rape crisis refuges, girls' and women's only sports' teams, girls' only schools or any other women's only service provider.

Older, single women, living on their own, as I do, can feel quite vulnerable so it's of paramount importance to feel completely safe from harm everywhere they go. It terrifies me to think that my personal safety could be adversely compromised by this proposed sex self-identification legislation becoming law. Many older women, like myself, may decide to remain house bound and refuse to take the risk of going out to places where men, claiming to be women, could potentially violate their privacy and safety.

Imagine the grave risk to children if a man, who is a paedophile and/or sexual predator, and allegedly claims to have transitioned to becoming a woman but still has his male appendages then gains unsupervised access to children and young people, such as Child Care Centres, Kindergartens and Girl Guides because he has claimed to be a woman. It's analogous to setting a fox loose in a henhouse!

A birth certificate is intended to be a sacrosanct official record and should be trusted to be true and accurate. Under this proposed BDMMR amendment, the birth certificate will be falsified and they will no longer be able to be trusted and all birth certificates will then be suspect and unreliable because no-one will ever know which ones have been tampered with. It won't be worth the paper it's written on. It's, therefore, outrageous that a legally binding document, such as a birth certificate, can be altered in such a way to cater to the transgender lobbyists who are aggressive and vitriolic in their demands. The NZ Minister of Internal Affairs is giving into them and the Prime Minister also supports them.

The NZ Labour government claims that there is no evidence of any detrimental effect from sex self-ID but they only need to look overseas for proof and start collecting data and statistics here in New Zealand rather than bury their heads in the sand and pretend there isn't an emerging problem. To re-iterate, it's abundantly clear that sexual self-ID has significant consequences for women and girls in relation to:

- Access to single-sex spaces and institutions
- Access to single-sex services such as care-giving, counselling and health professionals
- Meaningful records and statistics e.g. crime, health, employment and pay gap
- Allocation of resources
- Female only scholarships and quotas
- Representative positions for females
- Sports teams

No government or its agency has the right to give away the assigned biological definition of what a 'woman' is thereby seriously compromising children's, girls' and women's psychological and physical health, well being and safety. It goes against the laws of nature and the very essence of life itself for people to claim they can physically change sex because males and females are fundamentally different sexual beings physically, psychologically and emotionally. Biology is a material reality and in a sexist society, our sex based rights matter.

As this proposed legislation has gradually seen the light of day, despite government and local council anti democratic attempts to stop open discussion about it, it's not proving popular. According to TVNZ's 'Vote Compass' poll (November 2020) which included the question: 'Should people be allowed to change their sex as listed on their birth certificate without having to undergo a medical treatment to change their gender?' of the 181,430 respondents, only a mere 14% selected 'strongly agree' and 15% 'agree'.

I therefore strongly oppose the proposed sex self-identification legislation, likely to be passed into law later this year in NZ and thereby urge the 'United Nations Commission on the Status of Women' to urgently investigate how this ideology has gained so much influence here in New Zealand. It now threatens the considerable effort by women's rights campaigners to ensure and demand that women and girls have equality of opportunity (equal pay remains an issue) and protection from harm such as violent domestic abuse and sexual violation. Many rights eventually gained for NZ women were only enacted into law in the Human Rights Act as recently as 1993. It has been deeply disturbing to see these hard won gains, achieved throughout my life time, so seriously threatened and likely to disappear in a flash if not stopped forthwith.

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“The definition of female is being replaced by a concept of ‘gender identity.’ This is not a feminism I recognise’ - Joan McAlpine, Scottish MSP.

Virginia, Auckland, New Zealand