



Alberta
WOMEN'S ADVOCACY
Association

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Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Attention: Marc-Olivier Girard, Clerk of the Committee

Dear Mr. Girard,

**Re: Bill C-6, An Act to amend the *Criminal Code* (conversion therapy)
Submission on behalf of Alberta Women's Advocacy Association**

Please accept this letter on behalf of Alberta Women's Advocacy Association (AWAA) as our submission on Bill C-6, an act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy).

It is AWAA's position that the inclusion of "gender identity" in criminal legislation regarding conversion therapy will result in harm to children by hindering qualified professionals' abilities to offer support, alternative therapies, and exploratory psychological services to children who present with symptoms of gender dysphoria.

Although AWAA agrees with the scientific consensus that the practice of conversion therapy with the intent of changing a person's sexual orientation is wrong and harmful, the inclusion of gender identity in this Bill is a conflation of two entirely different issues.

Sexual orientation is a settled concept that cannot and should not be changed by anyone. However, gender identity is no such thing. The concept of gender identity is relatively new, relies on regressive sex-based stereotypes, and the medical fields have limited data and research on this issue. What's worse, most physicians and psychologists have been instructed to adopt an affirmative model of care that pushes individuals who self-identify as experiencing gender dysphoria onto a fast-track of hormonal and surgical procedures that have lifelong consequences, particularly for children.

The language and intent of Bill C-6 furthers the affirmative care model. Under this model, physicians must not attempt to explore whether a person or child presenting as suffering from gender dysphoria truly is. The type of safeguarding and gatekeeping rightly offered to adults and children for other far less invasive medical interventions are not permissible when it comes to gender dysphoria. The result is that many young adults are now emerging years after transitioning wanting to detransition and return to present as their natal sex, but cannot due to the devastating effects of the medical treatments they were rushed into.

Under the affirmative care model, proper exploratory psychological therapies for gender dysphoria are wrongly characterized as criminal conversion therapy under Bill C-6. It is very likely that any therapist, psychologist, or physician will feel at risk for criminal prosecution if they offer anything but affirmative care and thousands of Canadians, especially children who do not have the ability to consent to their own sterilization and medicalization, are being put at risk by the very people who are attempting to safeguard them by creating Bill C-6.

This is particularly harmful considering that the children who are self-identifying as the opposite sex are being told implicitly and explicitly that they were not only “born in the wrong body” but that their biological sex can be changed, which is false. It is a fact that 80% of gender-non-conforming children who are not medicalized grow up to be happy, healthy, homosexual adults. If an entire population of potentially homosexual children are “treated” with puberty blockers and told that they’re really heterosexual trans people, that is conversion therapy.

Canadian therapists must not be restricted in their ability to treat children suffering from real issues that may or may not be related to gender dysphoria, particularly since many of these children also experience autism, trauma, and other psychological ailments that could be the underlying cause for them to question their gender identity in the first place.

AWAA therefore urges the removal of “gender identity” from Bill C-6 as it is wrongly included and will result in the medicalization and sterilization of thousands of Canadian citizens and children.