

As someone who has spent a great part of my professional life around teenagers, I strongly support efforts to ensure that people are not discriminated against or taught/encouraged/forced to change their sexual orientation. However, I have many concerns about Bill C-6. These concerns include:

1. Conflating sex with gender. As a woman, a teacher and a mother I have seen the harm done to women, men and children by gender stereotypes. Gender is a harmful social construct. Sex, on the other hand, is a biological fact but also the basis on which I have seen many females harmed, excluded, or discriminated against. If as Canadians we are genuinely interested in human rights, we need to ensure that gender and sex are not considered interchangeable in any legal sense. Furthermore, in terms of education, we should be teaching ourselves and our children that gender doesn't exist – men, women, boys, girls can choose their own interests, their own style of dress, their own destinies without pretending to be something that they are not, engaging in dangerous medical interventions or infringing on the rights of women to their own protections, sports and private spaces.

2. Making affirmation the only possible recourse of action when trying to ensure that young people are as physically and mentally healthy as possible. I personally know a 16 girl who became convinced she was transgender and chose to have a double mastectomy. Her parents felt they had no other option but to confirm this belief that their daughter was not a girl and somehow “born in the wrong body”. They feared losing their child. Less than a year after the surgery, this child was enormously regretful, as are they parents. Any steps that we as a society take to make children believe that their perfectly healthy body parts need to be removed are the opposite of human rights. Research shows that many young people who consider themselves transgender are simply homosexual. Medical procedures to somehow alter a homosexual person into the other “gender” are a type of conversion therapy with serious and possibly lifelong consequences.

3. This essay, written by a person with many personal insights on the issue, highlights many of the problems with an affirmation only approach, which I believe that Bill C-6 may entrench when it comes to gender identity (as opposed to sexual orientation). <https://www.economist.com/open-future/2019/12/03/gender-identity-is-hard-but-jumping-to-medical-solutions-is-worse>