

29 November 2020

From: Riley McGuire

Brief to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Re: Bill C-6

I would like to recommend that certain changes be made to the proposed text of Bill C-6. Specifically,

1. the bill should proscribe *coercive* conversion therapy only, and not impinge on the rights of any LGBTQ2 persons, who should be free to hire any counselling or therapy services they might wish regarding their sexuality;
2. the bill should acknowledge the right of parents to discuss and educate their children in sexuality in accordance with the parents' beliefs (provided they not employ abusive or coercive practices);
3. the bill should acknowledge the right of religious communities and other communities to discuss and share their beliefs on human sexuality; and
4. all mentions of gender identity should be removed from the bill.

I make the first three recommendations so that the bill may be more in line with the rights and freedoms protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically those outlined in Article 2 of the Charter, which states:

‘Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- (d) freedom of association.’

I make the fourth recommendation because there is not yet a scientific consensus on the notions of gender identity or the long-term effects of gender or sex changes (and some studies show that these last can be negative)<sup>1</sup>; it would therefore be rash to introduce legislation that might in the long run prove unscientific or even harmful.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. one study on the website of the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health found that ‘[t]he overall mortality for sex-reassigned persons was higher during follow-up (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 1.8–4.3) than for controls of the same birth sex, particularly death from suicide (aHR 19.1; 95% CI 5.8–62.9). Sex-reassigned persons also had an increased risk for suicide attempts (aHR 4.9; 95% CI 2.9–8.5) and psychiatric inpatient care (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 2.0–3.9). Comparisons with controls matched on reassigned sex yielded similar results. Female-to-males, but not male-to-females, had a higher risk for criminal convictions than their respective birth sex controls.’ Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3043071/>