

I write with reference to the above bill, whose proceedings were recalled for further consideration, and to express considerable concern about what seems to me to be evidence constructed on a very poor basis: specifically, the issue of Sex and Gender.

Consultation appears to note specifically that a question of Sex should not be used, except in certain minimal circumstances, and that the approach should be weighted instead towards Gender.

There is no doubt that for the purpose of this evidence, Sex and Gender have been conflated, and this is nonsense. Further, it is dangerous nonsense.

A specific provision of Hate Crime needs to include Misogyny, a sex based and inclusive term, and not one that can either be assumed to be part of the background to this Bill, or one that can be ignored in everyday life.

There are also instances of wrongful statements backing up terminological conflation, lack of consideration of the difference between self and biological identification - and the implications leading from this do not bode well for (biologically identified) womens', or indeed Transgender individuals' rights - and misquotation of expert views.

All in all, this is a less than impressive set of evidence, and needs to be revised - or thrown out and done again, properly. This would have the benefit also of saving Government Ministers' embarrassment at trying to defend the indefensible.

It is understood that asking questions entirely on Sex will not provide a full picture. But neither will questions based on Gender. Biological identity is not a matter of absolute privacy - how can it be? - but skewing the collection of data in this way by a Professional organisation does beggar belief.

All of this is feeding into, or from?, the toxic climate created around transgenderism by people who either ought to know better, or who have something to gain by exploiting the vulnerability of actual transgender people.

In reality, a reasonable social conversation will allow this issue to be explored and resolved, to the benefit of all, in a civilised manner and in the sort of Scotland we want to live in.

But this sort of bad preparation will contribute little or nothing towards that end, beyond bringing the whole matter into disrepute and creating discontent.

For goodness sake, and for myself , my daughters and granddaughters - let us try to make being a Scotswoman an identity to be proud of and safe within.

Please note that my comment is based on a briefing note supplied by ForWomen Scotland, which will be circulated widely so that we can hope to have a decent and better informed discussion in the future.

I look forward, with concern, to future developments.

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