

The NDP's genderless utopia

Every Alberta student, male and female alike, now has the right to use the girls' washrooms and change rooms, depending not on the reality of biology, but purely on the student's own feelings.

Schools at which kids wear uniforms can no longer insist that only girls wear skirts. Girls must be allowed to join the boys' hockey team. Boys are entitled to attend a girls' sex education class. Schools must work toward the elimination of single-gender sports, meetings, clubs and activities. Schools must even stop using "gendered" language like mother, father, him, her, Mr., Mrs., and instead use "non-gendered" language like "caregivers" and "partners."

In Alberta, the feelings of a boy who thinks he's a girl are far more important than the privacy rights and the feelings of girls who don't want to share their change room with a boy. Girls who feel uncomfortable about a physical male using their change room will need to go elsewhere. Likewise, how boys might feel about a girl using their locker-room is now irrelevant.

Welcome to the NDP's genderless utopia, where the government requires everyone to pay lip service to the absurd idea that the innate biological and psychological differences between men and women are irrelevant. Education Minister David Eggen expects every public, private, Catholic, charter

and alternative school in Alberta to implement his government's ideology, which holds that "self-identification" trumps biological reality. Eggen also attacks the bond between parents and their children, by insisting that schools not inform parents about their own child's "gender expression."

Of course, the NDP's "Guidelines for Best Practices" regarding "Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions" purports to be based on evidence and research. But the document does not refer to any credible evidence or objective research. Instead, it provides links only to ideological advocacy on the part of bureaucrats, special interest lobby groups and the teachers' union.

Most parents reject the idea that one's personal, subjective feelings should oust the scientific fact that people are either biologically male or biologically female. Dr. Ken Zucker, while clinical lead at the Gender Identity Service of Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, helped many families treat their children's gender identity disorder, also known as gender dysphoria.

The NDP ignores evidence that therapy for gender dysphoria, if undertaken in childhood, has a solid record of success in reconnecting gender identity with biological reality. Many parents are grateful to Zucker for sparing their children a lifetime of hormone treatments, and possibly major surgery. A free society fosters frank and honest debate about sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual morality and related issues. Debate is the best way for truth to emerge triumphant over falsehood.

Different opinions about these issues will invariably lead to a demand for different kinds of schools, each with its own perspectives and policies, from which parents can choose the best education for their children. Parents love their own children more — and know their own children better — than any politician, bureaucrat or lobbyist. Children don't come one-size-fits-all, so education shouldn't either.

Allowing boys to use the girls' washrooms and change rooms does not create a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment in Alberta's schools. These new top-down, one-size-fits-all requirements disrespect parents, and their legal right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. This right is particularly important for the parents of a child who struggles with gender identity, or who feels confused about sexual orientation.

Unfortunately, these new mandatory guidelines violate students' privacy rights, undermine parental rights in education, and prevent schools from making their own choices about how best to create a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.

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