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Who are the real bullies in Alberta?

In 1948, Canada was one of 48 countries to vote in favour of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.” Having recently defeated Nazi Germany and other regimes which suppressed the freedoms of expression, association, conscience and religion, Canadians understood the importance of the right of parents to determine the nature and content of their children’s education.

In 1976, Canada ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, agreeing to respect the liberty of parents “to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.” Through this Covenant, Canada recognized the family as “the natural and fundamental group unit of society” that is “entitled to protection by society and the State.”

Canada’s own Constitution, in 1867, expressly protected the right of religious minorities to educate their own children in their own faith, regardless of whether this pleases or offends the majority of voters.

But in 2016, parents no longer enjoy the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. Nor can parents ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions. Meaningful choice in education is being crushed by a bullying government that imposes a “one-size-fits-all” model.

Alberta’s new gender Guidelines are a prime example. Parents know that allowing boys and girls into opposite-sex bathrooms and showers will create a disrespectful and unsafe environment for children. But the Alberta government has removed the “red flag” that all girls naturally have when a man or boy walks into the change room after them. How is a girl supposed to discern whether the man in the bathroom with her is a rapist, a peeping tom, or merely a transsexual who thinks he’s a woman trapped in a man’s body? The Guidelines state that girls who object to this new trans-utopia must change elsewhere. Who will help these girls when they are called “bigots” and “transphobic” and “hateful” for not embracing the latest ideological fashion?

Equally disturbing is the Guidelines’ requirement that teachers and principals not inform parents when their child expresses gender confusion, unless the child consents to this disclosure. Schools routinely inform parents when their child suffers a minor cut or scrape, or does poorly in math, or is the perpetrator or victim of bullying. Yet when a girl says that she is a boy, the Guidelines keep parents in the dark. When a boy wants to dress like a girl and be called by a girl’s name, the Guidelines rob parents of their right to determine the best way to love and care for their child.

Bill 10 now requires schools to establish and host a Gay-Straight Alliance or Queer-Straight Alliance upon the request of one student, regardless of whether or not such club is compatible with the school’s beliefs, mission and purpose. Schools can’t take a child on a local field trip to a

museum without express parental consent, yet the Alberta Government would have a boy sleeping in the same room with girls on an overnight trip to another city for a sports competition. A girl can’t join the school volley ball team if her parents object, but if she receives guidance and counselling about her sexuality through a Gay-Straight Alliance, the Alberta Government insists that her parents not be notified.

Putting kids in charge of what student clubs are allowed at schools is insane. We don’t trust children to drive cars, purchase alcohol or vote in elections, yet the Alberta Government says they are qualified to demand, and impose, ideological clubs on their schools, regardless of what parents think.

This repudiation of the right of parents to choose the kind of education to be given to their children is being justified on the pretext of stopping bullying. This pretext is a lie, because every school in Alberta was actively implementing anti-bullying policies many years before the Legislature very quickly (in four hours) passed Bill 10 in March of 2015. The real bully in schools today is the Alberta Government.

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