



WOLF COMMENT TO META OVERSIGHT BOARD ON PROPOSED BAN ON 'MISGENDERING'

INTRODUCTION

The Women's Liberation Front (WoLF) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to restore, protect, and advance the rights of women and girls. WoLF focuses on the human rights of women and girls ignored by mainstream feminist organizations, including the right to sex-segregated spaces, such as sports, and the protection of women's freedom of speech — which is necessary to advocate for our liberation from male violence and patriarchy. We thank the Meta Oversight Board for calling for input on gender identity and free speech.

1. THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS REQUIRES AN UNDERSTANDING OF SEX

The biological distinction between men and women has been the criteria by which women have been discriminated against, excluded from public life, exploited, enslaved, sexually abused, and disenfranchised throughout history. Women are not asked how they identify or how they see themselves before they experience these things. Women's feelings are wholly irrelevant to their condition and standing in this world.

While feminism has sought to improve women's status by dismantling sex stereotyping, the concept of "transgender" depends on the continued existence and amplification of these same sex stereotypes. Women and girls are female whether or not they look, act, or live their lives in a stereotypically feminine manner. To believe that sex is determined by a gendered soul or feminine appearance is to believe that femininity is the same thing as being female. This belief is offensive and harmful to women.

A) SEX IS OBJECTIVE AND IMMUTABLE, WHILE GENDER IS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED AND IS HARMFUL AND OPPRESSIVE TO WOMEN AND GIRLS.

"Sex" and "gender" both have distinct definitions and criteria. Sex is an immutable characteristic based in reality. It is defined by reproductive function; a male produces sperm and a female produces eggs, gestates, and gives birth. The National Institute of Health (NIH) describes sex as "a classification based on biological differences . . . between males and females rooted in



their anatomy and physiology. By contrast, gender is a classification based on the social construction (and maintenance) of cultural distinctions between males and females.”¹ The World Health Organization (WHO) agrees, defining “gender” as “the socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women.” WHO further notes that these socially constructed roles “give rise to gender inequalities, i.e., differences between men and women that systematically favor one group.”²

A person who believes in gender identity believes that a woman is a person (male or female) who “identifies” as a woman. But a man identifying as a member of the female sex would mean identifying as a member of the reproductive class that produces eggs, gestates, and gives birth. Of course, that is impossible.

B) WOMEN HAVE SINGLE-SEX SPORTS FOR A REASON

Even in the U.S., despite ostensible legal equality between the sexes, there are still significant disadvantages to being born female, including many barriers to women’s participation in sports.³ These barriers include the increased risk of physical harm to women and girls participating in sports, the risk of sexual assault and abuse from coaches or other athletes, menstruation and its impact on the body, and the risk of pregnancy, wanted or not, and its impact on athletic performance — a uniquely female experience.

A female athlete does not escape any of these obstacles, nor does she gain any competitive advantage, by self-identifying as male. Likewise, a male athlete’s self-identification as female does not subject him to this same myriad of obstacles female athletes face, so he retains an innate competitive advantage regardless of his subjective identity claims.

Meta’s Bullying and Harassment Community Standard prohibits “cognizable attacks and calls for exclusion.” Calling a male participating in women’s sports male (or referring to him as a “man” or “boy”) is not exclusion. Male athletes could always participate in sports, limited only by their own ability and determination. Girls, however, have been systematically excluded from sports in the United States until very recently, with the culture only changing after being forced to by law (Title IX). When a boy takes a spot on a girls’ team, a girl has been excluded.

¹ Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Assessing Interactions Among Social, Behavioral, and Genetic Factors in Health; Hernandez LM, Blazer DG, editors. *Genes, Behavior, and the Social Environment: Moving Beyond the Nature/Nurture Debate*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2006. 5, Sex/Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Health (emphasis added). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19934/>

² World Health Organization, *Gender, Equity, and Human Rights in Western Pacific*. <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/gender-equity-and-human-rights>

³ Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, *Barriers to sports participation for women and girls*, (2008). <https://www.lrsport.org/uploads/barriers-to-sports-participation-for-women-girls-17.pdf>



If calling out males who choose to take the spots of women and girls in athletics is considered “exclusion” and “hate speech”, then all support for women’s sports should be banned by Meta — because women’s sports inherently exclude men. Or, to put it in terms Meta may understand: *This is a feature, not a bug.*

2. GENDER IDENTITY IS A PSEUDO-RELIGIOUS BELIEF WITH NO BASIS IN REALITY THAT SHOULD NOT BE FORCED ON OTHERS

Freedom of speech includes the ability to express your belief in any number of scientifically absurd ideas — often called “religion.”

The disconnect of the metaphysical “gender identity” from the physical sexed body is comparable to the religious concept of a soul: “the principle of life, feeling, thought, and action in humans, regarded as a distinct entity separate from the body, and commonly held to be separable in existence from the body; the spiritual part of humans as distinct from the physical part.”⁴

Some religions may sincerely believe in the soul, and those individuals should have the right on Meta and elsewhere to express that belief. But, perhaps even more important, is the right to express the belief that one does *not* have a soul, regardless of what a prominent and powerful community may say.

Meta should not force the belief of a gender identity on others any more than it would force any other unscientific religious belief. To force individuals to call a man “she,” especially in the context of a debate on women’s rights, is forcing women to claim adherence to this false belief system in order to participate in public life on Meta.

3. WOMEN’S FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS THREATENED WHEN WE CAN NOT SPEAK THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR OPPRESSION

The sociopolitical context of this debate is extremely concerning.

Advocates for the gender identity movement have encouraged the view that it is hate speech not to speak and act at all times as though a person’s claimed gender identity was their real sex.

⁴ Soul Definition, Dictionary.com (based on Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2020).¹
<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/soul>



Women have been fired from their jobs⁵, threatened with and faced real-world violence⁶, and in Europe even faced legal consequences⁷ — all for calling a man a man.

In one of the most egregious examples of women's free speech being violated, victims of rape have been forced to call their male rapist "she" in court — which WoLF has directly witnessed.

How can women truly discuss the impact of male violence and patriarchy on our lives when we are not allowed to name the problem?

The Oversight Board claims to prioritize supporting the freedom of expression of women as a strategic priority⁸. If Meta were to ban stating a person's sex as "hate speech", women would no longer be able to meaningfully engage in public discussion about feminism, patriarchy, their rights, or male violence on Meta's platforms.

4. PROPOSED POLICIES

In alignment with the Oversight Board's stated goal of protecting women's "rights to freedom of expression on social media," we encourage Meta to adopt a policy explicitly protecting women's ability to advocate for their rights, including by not limited to:

1. The right to properly identify the sex of an individual or groups of individuals
2. The right to advocate for women's single-sex spaces (including in sports) for the purpose of protecting women's safety, dignity, and societal advancement
3. The right to advocate for women's rights, with recognition that there is a known conflict between laws and policies promoting "gender identity" and women's rights.
4. The right to advocate for LGB rights, especially the protection of lesbians, including protection from heterosexual biological males who call themselves lesbians.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please feel free to reach out to: executivedirector@womensliberationfront.org

⁵ <https://4w.pub/women-united-states-fired-for-talking-about-feminism/>

⁶ <https://womensdeclarationusa.com/wdi-usa-statement-about-nvda-action-in-portland/>

⁷

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/04/gender-critical-feminist-charged-over-allegedly-transphobic-tweets>

⁸ <https://www.oversightboard.com/strategic-priorities/>