



Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Bill Inquiry into Supplementary Order Paper 59 Submission by Family First NZ

**Governance and Administration Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington**

This submission is being made by Family First NZ, a registered charitable organisation that researches, educates and advocates on family issues.

We oppose the proposed legislation and the SOP.

What is a birth certificate, and what is its purpose?

1. The Department of Internal Affairs website [says](#) –

“A New Zealand Birth Certificate is an official document containing registered information about a person’s birth as at the date of issue.” (our emphasis added)

2. The role of the Birth Certificate is also spelt out in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

Article 7 states: “The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.”

Article 8 says: “States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.”

3. A birth certificate is a historical record based on fact – not a political tool to further an ideology. A government document should tell the truth.
4. Circumstances may change but a historical document should not be able to be changed. The effect of this proposal would be to insert a biological lie.
5. One submitter to the select committee considering this earlier version of this bill [said](#):

“The idea that sex is something immaterial that can be “nominated” undermines all efforts to close a gender pay gap... The same will be true for discussions of violence against women... Women’s safety and sovereignty in women’s refuges, bathrooms, changing rooms, sports teams, representative positions, quotas, and all-girls schools are undermined by the concept of “sex nomination”. “Sex nomination” also allows men to undermine the accomplishments of female athletes, and push back progress women have made in competitive sports. It allows young men to change entire Girls’ College and bathroom policies without any affected women or girls being consulted. Most alarmingly, the concept of “sex nomination” has serious potential to enable male sex offenders to gain automatic access to women’s prisons upon sentencing.”

Inserting a biological lie

6. Currently, if someone wants to legally change their gender on their birth certificate, they need approval from a doctor or a judge, with medical evidence of a sex change. About 20 people go through this process each year.
7. But as part of this proposed change to the self-identification process, no medical evidence is required for the change – just ‘self-identity’.
8. All references to “*medical treatment*”, “*medical evidence*”, “*physical conformation*”, and “*sexual reassignment*” which were required previously to prove a physical sex change will be removed.

ADULTS

9. The bill provides for an adult or someone as young as 16 years old to apply to register their nominated sex, which may be “*female*”, “*male*”, or “*any other sex or gender*” .
10. [The [earlier version of the proposed law](#) was going to be “*female*”, “*male*”, “*X (unspecified)*” or “*Intersex*”. Intersex is a genuine medical diagnosis – a biological condition applying to a very small number of births – approximately 1 in 2,000.]
11. But choosing “*any other sex or gender*”, “*female*” or “*male*” based on feelings isn’t biological. And “*any other sex or gender*” is not defined.

TEENS

12. A teen aged 16-17 can apply to change the sex on their birth certificate to the opposite sex or to “*any other sex or gender*” with EITHER the written consent from the person’s guardian OR a letter of support from a “*suitably qualified third party*” (which is undefined).
13. This means that this process could happen without parental consent, and potentially without a doctor’s approval.
14. And what if one parent agrees and one doesn’t? A [recent case from Canada](#) proves just how disruptive this could become.

CHILDREN

15. For a child younger than 16, their parent/s can apply for the registration of the child’s “*nominated*” sex i.e. that’s any child – 3, 5, 9 years, any child up to 15 – and again it may be “*female*”, “*male*” or “*any other sex or gender*” that they “*nominate*”.
16. A letter of support is also required from a “*suitably qualified third party*” (this is not defined – and therefore may not have to be a doctor and can be chosen by the parent.)
17. There is no limit to the number of times you can change the gender on your birth certificate. Ironically, you can reapply to revert to the sex recorded at birth. Perhaps the doctor or midwife did get it right after all.
18. It is well-established today that the overwhelming majority of such children who experience gender dysphoria grow out of it by the time they reach puberty.
19. Thus, a growing number of leading clinics seeing such children, such as those in [Canada](#), [Netherlands](#), [Finland](#), [Sweden](#) (and a recent significant UK [High Court](#) case) do not recommend parents and schools facilitate gender changes in such children.
20. The push in culture today to embrace and affirm such children’s wishes is founded more upon a political and parental ideology than it is in careful science and experience.
21. This will lock children into transgenderism.

How many genders?

22. How many genders will be available to choose from? Facebook got up to 56, and then [introduced a freeform field to enter your own gender](#).
23. This will make the collection of statistics and their subsequent analysis very difficult.

Choosing 'mother' / 'father' / 'parent'

24. Each parent who is notifying the birth of a child can specify whether they wish to appear on the child's birth certificate as the child's "mother", "father", or "parent".
25. This raises immediate questions. Can the mother choose the label "father"- and why is "parent" deemed necessary? Once again, this has the potential to distort the collection of statistics and the accompanying social policy analysis.
26. Removing the biological father- or the biological mother from a document that records biological history - [as is already being allowed to happen by the Department of Internal Affairs](#) – is simply wrong.
27. Biology tells a story – but this bill will distort that story. Nature discriminates. A male and a female are required to create a new life.
28. Biology discriminates, and so should we, if we want to tell the truth.

Conclusion

29. This aspect of the bill is flawed because it concerns our understanding of fundamental human nature, who each of us are as male and female, and the kind of adult direction and support our children require, deserve and receive from us.
30. Binary is the only gender story there is amongst humanity when it comes to gender and sex-distinction. There simply are not many genders. But of course, there are many different ways to be a healthy male or female without holding to narrow gender stereotypes.
31. A Government document recording a birth should tell the truth.
32. The SOP should be rejected.



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