CENTER FOR ARIZONA POLICY

POLICY PAGES

Harms of the Transgender Movement

August

OVERVIEW

A few short years ago it was a well-known and accepted fact that sex was biological, determined by chromosomes and evident in reproductive organs. Sex was confirmed at birth, not assigned, nor could it be reassigned. Although the facts have not changed, the culture has, leading to a host of confusing, unscientific claims of which we cannot yet know the full impact or consequence.

We can, however, begin to assess the initial effects of a quickly growing movement that touches nearly every aspect of life: education, health care, religion, business, law, and the basic understanding of humanity. What has always been seen by medical health professionals as a dysphoria that required treatment is now labeled a gender identity with all the authority of biological sex.

The pressure to embrace transgenderism as a foundational reality to be affirmed and celebrated has redefined medical care, driven academia, and the media, even reformulate how children should be reared.

The movement has raced ahead of the consequences, compounding problems and setting up unimaginable suffering for future generations. A rush to label children transgender, pump them with hormones, surgically remove their reproductive organs, and snatch them from their questioning parents violates foundational rights and natural law. It also places the most vulnerable in a position of experimentation, as the long-term effects of such decisions are not yet fully known.

ANALYSIS

After the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 decision to legalize same-sex marriage throughout the country, activists sped toward normalizing transgenderism before America knew what it meant.



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In no time, transgenderism reached into children's shows, drag queens read to four-year-olds at the public library, and long-time preschool cartoons celebrated "transgender families" in a singalong hosted by an animated drag queen. Trans activists quickly dropped the "story" in "drag queen story hour" and moved right into raunchy dancing for and with children, spreading their legs³, teaching children to twerk⁴, and perform for tips⁵.

Today, many medical, political, and academic leaders put the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) worldview above all other worldviews, including those fundamental principles on which the country was founded and to which all other countries subscribed since the beginning of time, namely, biological humanity.

Those in authority set gender identity above other rights and values, even over the rights of parents to rear their own children. An ASU professor recently called for parents to lose their "veto power" over their children's choice to transition.⁶ The number of parents already losing their children to ideological courts sold on the notion that gender identity trumps all else continues to rise.⁷ Activists use the celebrity status of people like "Caitlyn" Jenner to further the pressure and influence young minds.⁸

Many levels of government embrace the false notion that gender is fluid. President Joe Biden hosted a "Pride" party at the White House, where two "Pride" flags flanked the American flag;⁹ a symbol of just how high the movement is held by those beholden to it. Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs has shown her support for the LGBT movement by hanging the "pride" flag from the state Capitol, ¹⁰ tweeting "trans women are women," ¹¹ and earning the endorsement of the largest LGBT activist group in the nation. ¹²

During the Covid school lockdowns it became apparent that school boards across the nation had implemented transgender affirming curricula and even secretly socially transitioned students behind their parents' backs.¹³

Not surprisingly, as the movement steamrolls ahead, the number of people, especially young people, who identify as any of the many genders associated with the LGBT movement has risen, according to interviewees in a self-identifying Gallup poll.¹⁴

Trans activists pressure businesses, politicians, even the medical community to embrace and demand compliance from customers, constituents, and patients in order to engage in public commerce. The nation's most powerful LGBT lobby rates corporations, providing a Corporate Equity Index (CEI) score based on their commitment to the movement. The movement of the movement.

This growing pressure on society has led to a dangerous rise in the number of adolescent girls who suddenly identify as males. Independent journalists and researchers have noted this



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phenomenon known as Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD) and have suffered significant backlash for raising questions.

The harms of the transgender movement have only begun to surface and already include babies "breast fed" by males using a "chest-feeding" contraption to simulate breast feeding;¹⁷ children raised with "no gender" and given the daunting task of deciding their sex; children pressured to take cross-sex hormones and receive surgeries that carry physical risks and irreversible consequences, all with no evidence "transitioning" relieves emotional suffering.¹⁸

This, despite the fact that 80 to 95 percent of children said to have gender dysphoria come to accept their biological sex by adolescence – if they are left alone to let the natural process play out. ¹⁹

PROBLEMS WITH THE TRANSGENDER MOVEMENT

- 1. It targets children Transgender activists have both subtly and overtly targeted children in their efforts to further their cause. The preschool cartoon, Blue's Clues featured several "transgender families" on its pride parade sing-along, complete with a young beaver girl's double mastectomy scars. A video, now removed, featured a gay men's choir singing about how they were "coming for the children." Pixar featured a 14-year old "non-binary" character in its latest animated children's film. This is in addition to the above mentioned sexualized children's drag shows and the "family friendly" pride festivals featuring sex toys and cartoon characters in drag. Evidence of the unquestioning embrace of widespread transgenderism in children can be found with a simple online search of the words. Countless pages of affirming sites raise no doubt the new phenomenon is authentic and far-reaching, offering teens the answer to their awkward adolescent questions. The largest medical associations embrace the lucrative "treatment" of putting children on puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, despite the irreversible consequences. And the control of the irreversible consequences.
- 2. **It leads to Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria** (**ROGD**) Ivy League educated journalist, Abigail Shrier's investigation found a frightening spike in the number of adolescent girls who suddenly identified as boys and did so in groups at a time.²⁵ Brown University Professor, Lisa Littman issued a study finding similar results and cited concerns about a movement that isolates the teens from their families and outside resources. She found 87% of the girls became transgender after their friends did or after spending a lot of time on certain online sites.²⁶



Both Shrier and Littman were censored and shunned by activists and peers for raising such questions. Brown pulled Littman's study and issued an apology, though no evidence was offered to counter the findings.

Shrier found a pattern of young girls lured into the transgender world by peers and online influencers that gradually pulled the teens away from families and others who dared not to affirm their new-found identities.²⁷

Moreover, it violates the rights of parents to guide their children's upbring. As mentioned above, parents face the growing risk of losing their own children to the powerful transgender movement.

3. It ignores the physical risks of hormones and surgeries – Young teens are encouraged to take cross-sex hormones and eventually have irreversible surgeries to affirm their gender identities, even as the long-term consequences of such actions are still emerging. Girls as young as 13 are having their breasts removed.²⁸ What is known so far: Hormone therapies can cause cardiovascular disease, stroke, infertility, deep vein thrombosis, diabetes, and bone loss.²⁹ Some "sex reassignment" surgeries cause irreversible damage as they involve the removal of reproductive organs, rendering the patient infertile or sterile.³⁰

As noted above, without intervention, almost all children who experience gender dysphoria grow to embrace their biological sex by adolescence. But when put on puberty suppressing hormones to affirm their gender identity, *all of the children* continued to embrace their transgender identity, at least for some time. The American College of Pediatrics (ACPeds) concludes, "[T]he protocol itself inevitably leads the individual to identify as transgender. There is an obvious self-fulfilling nature to encourage a child with GD to socially impersonate the opposite sex and then institute pubertal suppression." 31

4. **It shuts down dissenting views and discredits the medical community** – ACPeds is one of the few medical associations that has not blindly embraced the transgender movement, nor is it hostile toward it. Many notable medical entities have ignored the evidence contrary to the movement's rhetoric and promoted transgender affirming treatments even in the face of great risk to patients.³²

Shrier's research found a strong embrace of the transgender movement on the part of the medical community. "Affirmative care' [is] the prevailing medical standard for the treatment of transgender patients. The standard asks – against much evidence, and sometimes contrary to their beliefs of the matter – that mental health professionals 'affirm' not only the patient's self-diagnosis of dysphoria agree, in other words, that a male patient with gender dysphoria who identifies as a woman *really is* a woman." ³³



She chronicles parents' experiences of losing their children to the medical "experts" who said they had to affirm their children's gender identity, hormones and all, or the children would kill themselves. ³⁴

Shrier found the same aggressive, agenda-driven response from schools. Many had policies of affirming a student's gender identity without divulging it to parents, even going out of their way to hide it from parents.³⁵ Within a few years of Shrier's investigation, such secret transitions at school were evident, as noted above.

- 5. **It doesn't lead to mental healing** Taking cross-sex hormones or surgically altering one's body to align with his or her gender identity does not lead to long-term healing and happiness, nor does it alleviate the mental health concerns. ³⁶ A significant study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry found "*no advantage*" of surgery or hormone treatment in patients seeking to transition. The gender-affirming treatments and surgeries did not bring the promised mental health benefits. ³⁷ It should be noted that the AJP first reported that the study found the opposite, but it issued a correction after pressure from the author of the study.
- 6. It ignores the warnings of those who have detransitioned The rush to affirm one's gender identity before enough evidence is compiled and risks borne out is leading to more and more incidents of regret. This is especially costly to young people who sacrifice their health and fertility long before they can understand the full consequences. Many women and men in their 20s and 30s are finding they cannot fully recapture their femininity or masculinity. They've gone bald from the hormones or forfeited their genitalia now necessary to naturally start a family. Not often reported is the pain and regret of those who "detransition" but stories emerge outside the mainstream media, including a new mom with mastectomy scars and a baby bottle, wishing she could get her breasts back. 39

<u>Chloe Cole</u> is one of the first to file a lawsuit after doctors stopped her natural puberty process and removed her breasts when she was still a minor. ⁴⁰ Another woman, Keira Bell wrote, "I started to realize that the vision I had as a teenager of becoming male was strictly a fantasy and that it was not possible. My biological make-up was still female and it showed, no matter how much testosterone was in my system....I started to just see a woman with a beard, which is what I was. I felt like a fraud, and I began to feel more lost, isolated and confused than I did when I was pre-transition." Katie Anderson recently spoke out about her experience that left her irreversibly marred. She has since embraced her true identity and warns others of the radical trans movement.



7. **It devalues women, victimizing both girls and women** – Requiring biological men who identity as women be treated as women destroys the long-fought achievements of women in America and ignores the uniqueness of the female and male bodies. It requires women and girls to forfeit their privacy and safety in locker rooms, restrooms, domestic violence shelters, prisons, dorm rooms, and more. It also forces women and girls to compete against biological males when striving for college scholarships and accolades.

See The Transgender Movement's Harm to Women (link)

RELATED LAW

Many cities and states have passed so-called nondiscrimination laws meant to protect people who identify as a member of the LGBT movement from undue discrimination. But these laws are often used to coerce compliance, and they are wielded as a sword against those who hold to the fundamental understanding of human sexuality. See *The Harms of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Laws* (link)

California leads the way in laws forcing the transgender movement's worldview on citizens and non-citizens alike. Governor Gavin Newsom signed a law in 2022 that allows government to take temporary custody of children from other states so they can "transition" against their parents' consent.⁴² State legislators in 2023 passed a bill that requires parents affirm their child's gender identity and expression or the state will take custody of them and "transition" them.⁴³ The governor vetoed the bill and the California Legislature is considering an override.

In an effort to silence opposition, several states have passed laws banning licensed counselors from helping children with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender identity issues – unless they counsel them to *embrace* the transgender movement. In 2017, Pima County enacted a similar ban on talk therapy for minors. And earlier this year, Governor Katie Hobbs issued an executive order to the same effect for families of government employees.⁴⁴

Outlawing one viewpoint while allowing the opposing viewpoint is unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court will likely decide if these counseling bans meet the viewpoint discrimination standard. The Court is considering whether to hear a case out of Washington State after several lower courts ruled such laws unconstitutional, leaving a split in the Third and Ninth Circuits.⁴⁵



Specific to the transgender issue, Arizona law prohibits gender related surgeries for minors, but children can still access puberty blockers and cross sex hormones, which ultimately lead to further transitioning as referenced above.

Arizona also passed the Save Women's Sports Act requiring only biological girls and women compete on female sports teams. That law is currently being litigated. The Biden Administration issued an executive order threatening to withhold federal funds if schools fail to allow boys and men to compete on girls' and women's sports teams at least in some cases.⁴⁶

See The Transgender Movement's Harm to Women (link)

On a federal level, the Equality Act similarly threatens to undermine the foundational principles and freedoms of Americans by way of coercion. It would effectively force individuals and businesses, including religious organizations, to affirm transgenderism and other sexuality related "identities" the movement puts forth, or face government punishment.⁴⁷

These coercive efforts continue even as at least four European countries have stopped transgender surgeries, especially for minors, based on the lack of evidence showing it helps alleviate the dysphoria and causes both physical and emotional problems.⁴⁸

TALKING POINTS

- 1. The transgender movement does far more harm than good. It exploits women and children and endangers the future of teens who do not fully realize the irreversible consequences of their current decisions.
- 2. Hormone treatments and surgeries foisted upon vulnerable children and teens do not bring about the mental health benefits they promise. Studies show "transitioning" does not provide long-term relief. It brings pain, regret, and irreversible physical damage.
- 3. Up to 95% of children who present gender dysphoric symptoms end up embracing their biological sex by adolescence if they are left alone to progress naturally. We should not be interfering with that process by introducing hormones and social transitioning techniques that lead to "transitioning."



- 4. The transgender movement has infiltrated the medical community, leading to critical medical decisions based on ideology instead of on science and biology.
- 5. The transgender movement targets children with its ideology, ignores the physical risks of treatment, and devalues women and girls.

CONCLUSION

The pressure to embrace transgenderism as a foundational reality to be affirmed and celebrated has redefined medical care, driven academia and the media, even reformulate how children should be reared. Transgender affirming laws shut down opposing views and coerce parents into supporting the irreversible and experimental "treatments" or risk losing custody of their children.

The movement has raced ahead of the consequences, compounding problems and setting up unimaginable suffering for future generations. A rush to label children transgender, pump them with hormones, surgically remove their reproductive organs, and snatch them from their questioning parents violates foundational rights and natural law. It also places the most vulnerable in a position of experimentation, as the long-term effects of such decisions are not yet known.



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