



Women's Human Rights Campaign

Testimony of Vajra Ma, Chair, Women's Human Rights Campaign USA

Before the Utah House of Representatives
On H.B. 92

SUPPORT

February 17, 2021

Thank you, members of the Utah House of Representatives, for allowing me the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 92.

The Women's Human Rights Campaign (WHRC) is a global nonpartisan group of volunteer women dedicated to protecting women's sex-based rights. Our volunteers include academics, writers, organizers, activists, lawyers, and health practitioners. [The Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights](#) was created by the founders of WHRC to lobby nations to maintain language protecting women and girls on the basis of sex rather than "gender" or "gender identity." In addition to re-affirming women and girls' sex-based rights, the Declaration notes that the concept of "gender identity" is increasingly used to "gender reassign" children who do not conform to sex role stereotypes or who are diagnosed with gender dysphoria, and calls upon states to recognize medical interventions made to this end as harmful practices.

I am the chair of WHRC USA, the U.S. chapter of WHRC. My interest in the legislation before the House of Representatives today, H.B. 92, is based upon Article 9 of our Declaration, "Reaffirming the need for the protection of the rights of the child," which is fully in keeping with the [United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC). Of particular relevance to this legislation is our reaffirmation of UNCRC Article 3(1), which states that, "[i]n all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration," and UNCRC Article 24, which calls for the recognition of "the right of the child to the

enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.”

House Bill 92 would prohibit the performance of a medically unnecessary procedure that inhibits puberty or that alters secondary sex characteristics on a minor. Because of the high risk of both long-term and permanent adverse consequences of these procedures, and the developmental inability of children and adolescents to give full, free, and informed consent to such interventions, WHRC USA strongly supports the proposed prohibitions.

Puberty is a natural and necessary stage of development, bridging childhood and adulthood, and human beings cannot change sex. To prevent the onset of a natural and necessary developmental stage, in pursuit of something impossible, or in order to create the appearance of something impossible is, as H.B. 92 states, “unprofessional conduct,” to say the least. The use of [Lupron](#) has never been approved by the FDA for “gender reassignment” purposes, and its adverse effects include interference with brain development, inhibition of bone-density development, greater risk of osteoporosis, and permanent loss of sexual function. [Effects of cross-sex hormones in girls](#) include permanent body hair and beard growth, permanent deepening of the voice, “male-pattern” baldness, [fertility loss](#), and increased rates of [ovarian and endometrial cancer](#). [In boys, effects include](#) decreased muscle mass, decreased adult height, infertility, testicular shrinkage, decreased libido, and increased risk of blood clots. Finally, of course, the effects of surgery, including the removal of teenage girls’ healthy breasts, are permanent.

As the UK high court recently ruled in the well-publicized case of [Keira Bell](#), a survivor of childhood medical harm for the purpose of “gender reassignment,” children cannot consent to such permanently damaging treatments. This type of medical harm to children is contrary not only to WHRC’s Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights and to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also to the core values of any decent society. It is central to any concept of human rights that children be allowed to grow to natural, healthy adulthood, and I strongly urge the Utah House of Representatives to pass H.B. 92