



27 February 2018

Governance and Administration Select Committee
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON
ga@parliament.govt.nz

Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Bill SUBMISSION

1.1 This submission is being made by Family First NZ, a registered charitable organisation that researches and advocates on family issues in the public domain.

1.2 The role of the Birth Certificate is spelt out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹

1.3 Article 7 of UNCROC 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.”

1.4 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.”

Birth certificate as an identification document

1.5 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. A birth certificate can only be used as evidence that an identity exists. The birth certificate should not be used as the sole form of evidence for asserting an individual’s identity, as it does not provide any link to the person presenting it.”² (our emphasis added)

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

² <https://www.govt.nz/assets/Documents/BDM/Sovereign-FAQ.pdf>

- 1.6 **We oppose subpart 7 – Changes to birth information relating to sex**
- 1.7 **We also oppose any changes that allow for just ‘self-identification’ of ‘gender’** (nominated sex) – as recommended by the Select Committee in 2017.
- 1.8 By choosing one’s own gender on a birth certificate, the certificates will become an object of personal identification only, and effectively tell medical professionals that they ‘got it wrong’ at time of birth.
- 1.9 This proposed legislation will ignore biological reality in favour of an ideology with no scientific backing, and in the process, simply bring about confusion and ambiguity. A birth certificate is a historical record based on biological fact.
- 1.10 Circumstances may change but a historical document should not be able to be changed.
- 1.11 A 2016 report which analysed over 200 peer-reviewed studies in the biological, psychological, and social sciences, concluded:
- The belief that gender identity is an innate, fixed human property independent of biological sex—so that a person might be a ‘man trapped in a woman’s body’ or ‘a woman trapped in a man’s body’—is **not supported by scientific evidence**.
 - Only a minority of children who express gender-atypical thoughts or behaviour will continue to do so into adolescence or adulthood. There is **no evidence** that all such children should be encouraged to become transgender, much less subjected to hormone treatments or surgery.³
- 1.12 Gender identity ideology ignores historical biological reality.
- 1.13 It is also concerning that the bill continues to allow the birth certificate of an ‘eligible child’ to be changed to the ‘nominated’ sex simply through an application of ‘the guardian’. It is well-established today that the overwhelming majority of such children - from 75 to 98 percent - who experience gender dysphoria grow out of it by the time they reach puberty. It is not inborn. Thus, the leading clinics seeing such children - such as those in Canada and the Netherlands - do not recommend parents and schools facilitate gender changes in such children for various reasons. The push in culture today to embrace and affirm such children’s wishes is founded more upon a political ideology than it is in careful science and experience.
- 1.14 There is also the question of just how many genders will be listed. Facebook has more than 70, and counting.⁴
- 1.15 It is concerning that when a petition⁵ on this issue was considered by the Government Administration Committee, and a recommendation made to include this proposed legislation, that advice was only sought from the Human Rights Commission (HRC). For such a major issue, it is vital that the very best medical advice and research is sought and examined.

³ Lawrence S. Mayer and Paul R. McHugh, *Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences*, The New Atlantis, Number 50, Fall 2016

⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/10930654/Facebooks-71-gender-options-come-to-UK-users.html>

⁵ https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/petitions/document/51DBHOH_PET71439_1/petition-of-allyson-hamblett-that-the-house-note-that

1.16 The Malta legislation which was mentioned and promoted in the Select committee report;

“removes the need for the applicant to seek medical advice, and eliminates any psychiatric, psychological, or medical records from the process. This model is based on the self-identification and self-determination of the applicant.”⁶ (our emphasis added).

1.17 The information on birth certificates is not “*imposed by others*”. It is based on biological reality and is an important factual historical document.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob McCoskrie', written in a cursive style.

Bob McCoskrie
National Director – Family First NZ

⁶ https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/SCR_74921/7d0edb73001c7f84cce5487118fdf27ae11bf613