



Claudia Puig, President
Los Angeles Film Critics Association

Delivered via email: cpuig.lafca@gmail.com

December 8, 2022

Dear Ms. Puig,

I am writing to inform you of a Women's Liberation Front petition addressed to the Los Angeles Film Critics Association (LAFCA). As of December 8, 2022, this petition has 712 signatories, signed by concerned women and men from the United States and around the world.

Recently, LAFCA voted to terminate single-sex awards categories, effectively dismantling women's opportunities to win career-changing awards.

We call upon LAFCA to immediately reverse its decision and reinstate sex-based awards categories for acting. Furthermore, we call upon LAFCA leaders to share the full language of this petition and the list of signatories with the entire LAFCA membership.

This document contains the full language of our petition, along with the signatures and comments of 712 signatories who believe that LAFCA has made a grave error in judgment.

We look forward to your response – we are confident that LAFCA will recognize that women deserve sex-based awards categories for acting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mahri Irvine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mahri Irvine, PhD

PETITION:

Recently, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association (LAFCA) voted to terminate single-sex awards categories, effectively dismantling women's opportunities to win career-changing awards.

We call upon the [Los Angeles Film Critics Association](#) (LAFCA) to immediately reverse its decision and reinstate sex-based awards categories for acting. Furthermore, we call upon LAFCA leaders to share the full language of this petition and the list of signatories with the entire LAFCA membership.

This petition responds to LAFCA's [recent announcement](#) that it would introduce "gender neutral" acting categories consisting of "two awards for Best Lead Performance and two awards for Best Supporting Performance," effectively dismantling the awards category for women, as [reported by Sasha Stone](#) (AwardsDaily). A whistleblower shared with Stone that the controversial decision won a 26 to 27 vote in favor of removing award categories for women. The next voting meeting to finalize the decision will be held on December 11, 2022.

Historically, sex-based awards categories for acting have increased the visibility of women on screen, inspiring countless girls and young women to see themselves represented in stories and media, as well as envisioning equal opportunities to pursue careers in the entertainment industry. Removing categories for women is a step backward in addressing Hollywood's misogynistic culture.

Hollywood's 'Woman' Problem

The Women's Media Center publishes an annual investigation into female representation within Oscar nominations and finds that [women are inadequately represented both on-screen and behind the screen](#). In fact, the Women's Media Center stated that, in 2022, "female representation dropped overall" and is "trending in the wrong direction."

Acting is sex-based; acting is frequently inseparable from sex, especially for major roles. When casting for the roles of Hermione Granger or Mary Poppins, women are considered; vice versa for men and the roles of Luke Skywalker or Rocky Balboa. No actor is equally eligible to play both sexes in any given film, much less pursue a career path that grants him or her equal opportunity to perform either sex. For example, most [top films feature more men than women, and most dialogue is written for men](#). Sex determines the career path of an actor or actress, especially in our male-dominated entertainment industry. And that's in addition to the fact that women are statistically paid less, and have a narrower period of prime earning years as lead performers.

Hollywood sexism does not stop at just actresses and actors. Of the top-grossing 250 films of 2016, [only 7% were directed by women](#). Oscar statistics prove that the films for which women are nominated — and for which they win — earn less at the box office, are [less likely to be nominated for and win](#) other awards, and are less frequently represented among Best Picture nominees and winners.

Out of 94 Oscar ceremonies, from 1927-28 to 2021, solo women directors have only been nominated 7 times and won just 3 awards. That's compared to the 92 times the award has gone to men (a tie in the first year), and the 458 nominations which have gone exclusively for men —

or teams of men. This means that men have secured 98% of the nominations and 97% of the wins in the Best Director category.

Awards categories for women disproportionately positively influence their careers. This is *not* the same for men. The films for which men are recognized are more often awarded and earn more money. When an actress is nominated for a film, those are films that have taken a chance. So if actresses no longer have a chance to win, producers will be de-incentivized to write significant, high-visibility roles for women. Writers, producers, and directors who prioritize women will lose a fair shot at career-boosting awards without dedicated award categories.

Denying Sex (and Sexism) Won't Help Women

When men are permitted to self-identify into women's awards and recognition categories, women lose the opportunity to be fairly considered for similar achievements to their male counterparts. It is also sexist to consider that a man with a stereotypically effeminate appearance is the same thing as a woman. Transforming two sex-based awards categories into one or more 'gender-neutral' award categories disproportionately harms women while privileging men who claim to 'feel like' women.

In this male-dominated industry, the decision to eliminate acting categories for women will result in reduced career and economic opportunities for women and for the producers who support them. Therefore, we must demand fair and equal representation in acknowledgment of past and present sex discrimination in the entertainment industry.

To continue to encourage Hollywood to write parts for actresses, we need sex-specific awards categories. Girls and young women who want to become actresses are inspired by seeing women win awards.

LAFCA: women and girls deserve a fair shot at awards and recognition! Please reverse your decision and immediately reinstate sex-based awards categories for acting.