

March 23, 2021

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

My name is Amie Ichikawa. I am the founder of the non profit organization Woman II Woman, I represent 1,300 current and formerly incarcerated women in California. I am writing you to shed light on the fact that the Equality Act will endanger not only incarcerated women, but all women on a national level if passed. I know this because, I am formerly incarcerated and what is currently happening in California State Prisons as a result of SB132 the "The Transgender Respect, Agency, and Dignity Act.", is the institutional version of the Equality Act. What the women in our state prisons are experiencing right now is what you are voting to expand nationwide.

The deceptive language in these articles is where the loopholes are hiding, but exist in plain sight to anyone looking to manipulate the law in order to get direct access to potential victims. At a glance these seem like things that are great and progressive for the prison system. Who would want to deprive someone of respect or equality? The same people who wrote these laws without giving any consideration to one of the most forgotten and easily expendable members of American society-incarcerated women.

Incarcerated transgender and gender non conforming people are now asked what their pronouns and honorifics are at intake. When I was processed into state prison I was told I was X37739. They now have the choice to select their own housing: "granting single-cell status, housing the individual with another incarcerated person of their choice, or removing the individual or individuals who pose a threat from any location where they may have access to the individual who has expressed a safety concern." In doing so, predators within the system now have direct access to individuals who have expressed safety concerns-the woman have thousands of ignored safety concerns. Everyone in prison looks danger in the face every single day. This is not what equality looks like.

Requests for transfers are piling up, and none of them are from transgender men seeking to move to a men's prison. Requests cannot be denied on any discriminatory reasons related to:

- (1) The anatomy, including, but not limited to, the genitalia or other physical characteristics, of the incarcerated person.
- (2) The sexual orientation of the incarcerated person.

Meaning, a man who is potentially manipulating the system by posing as a non binary or gender non conforming person, who is still anatomically male, and heterosexual has every right to serve their sentence in a women's prison. As you read this, there is a violent, serial rapist in C.i.w. who has completely stopped all hormone therapy, and is now openly living as a man in a women's facility. Even a violent rapist has more rights and more consideration given to their safety than the community of incarcerated women.

Most incarcerated women suffer from PTSD, have a long history of physical, sexual, and mental abuse, paired with damaging relationships. These women are not only serving the sentences they were given, but are now being given the additional sentence of living in constant fear that one of their new room mates might be one of the people who are abusing this new law. Women's prison has an entirely different layout than men's prison. In C.C.W.F., women are housed in units with 4 hallways. Each hallway has 8 rooms. Each room has 4 bunks, a toilet, two sinks and a shower. There are no toilet doors or shower doors. There are midsection partitions, while your upper body and lower body are fully exposed, blocking only the person's midsection. You take showers, and obviously use the toilet in your cell. There is no way to avoid exposing yourself at some point to your room mates whether it is intentional or not. In C.I.W., there are two person cells with showers at the end of each hallway. Toilets are in the cells at the head of the bunks. Again, there is no separation from bunk and toilet. These conditions are already intense. With the addition of having to do these daily activities, like taking a shower in the presence of someone with entirely different genitals is a huge oversight

by lawmakers of women's mental health and safety. The women's prisons are operating at over 100% capacity right now. Records show that C.C.W.F. Was operating at 131.7% capacity in 2020. This is an additional form of punishment and this is absolutely deliberate indifference towards women.

My team receives new information every day from women who have completely lost hope in the system, who are living in fear, who are wondering how they will be able to defend themselves not if but when things take a turn for the worst. They feel betrayed because they were excluded from the discussions and surveys regarding SB132. Women are now being excluded from the sworn protection from the Department of Corrections with the current verbiage used in SB132 that mirrors the Equality Act.

What is happening in California State prisons is the erasure of women's rights. The starting point is at the lowest level of society, removing the rights of women that have been forgotten. This is what the entire county will look like if the Equality Act is passed as is.

Thank you for you time and for the opportunity to share my communities concerns and give a voice to the voiceless. Please see the attached exhibit A and B that are letters from incarcerated women explaining what is happening to them as a result of this bill.

Respectfully,

Amie Ichikawa
Founder
Woman II Woman

Feb 26, 21

To: who it may concern

My name is Heather Knauff #WF7697. I am currently incarcerated CIW. I do not agree with Senate Bill 132 that was written by Senator Scott Weiner, and irresponsibly signed by Governor Newsom, that says the bill will support CDCR incarcerated transgender, non-binary and intersex community.

This will leave sex offenders to exploit women who are at a physical disadvantage to men.

We share very close quarters as is with limited privacy and protection to allow this is outrageous and unethical.

There are already men who converted to women who went back to being men to exploit this failing system, leaving the ~~a~~ already disadvantaged women population to suffer more by sex offenders.

Heather Knauff
Heather Knauff

My name is Danielle Falletto
I am currently incarcerated in
CIW. I do not agree with
Senate bill 132 that was written
by Senator Scott Weiner and
irresponsibly signed by Governor
Newsome. I do not agree with this.
I am in fear over this. I am
a victim of domestic violence and
rape. What if one of these
Sex offenders that have their
penises rapes us, then what?

I am requesting that revisions
are made to SB 132 that address
these serious safety concerns.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely

Danielle

Falletto

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