

# [A Conservative Defense of Women's Rights](#)

(as seen in the National Review)

Sometimes it's hard to be a woman. It's especially hard when everyone around you seems confused about what it even means to be a woman, and when people claim that a biological distinction between the sexes no longer matters in a legal sense.

In "[A Conservative Defense of Transgender Rights](#)," Josh Gelernter urges liberty-minded conservatives to hop aboard the trans train. Unfettered bathroom access is a matter of personal freedom, he says, dismissing concerns about predators and women's safety as unfounded. The question we must ask, he concludes, is whether it's "a good idea to empower the government to start lifting up people's skirts."

A better question would be, "Is it really a good idea to empower strange men to shower next to young girls at the gym?" States that fail to take preventative measures to protect the safety and privacy of their most vulnerable will inevitably find themselves responding to legislation that removes the very freedom they are trying to preserve — as was the case with the oh-so-controversial HB-2 in North Carolina.

We need to draw an important distinction: The anti-discrimination laws cropping up around the country don't protect "transgender" rights; they protect "gender identity." There's a major difference. We aren't talking about fully committed, post-operative people here. We're talking about more than 51 different "gender expressions." It means that people such as [Danielle Muscato](#), who has a full beard, male-pattern baldness, and male body parts (but who claims to identify as female) can waltz into the YMCA girls' locker room and shower next to my six-year-old daughter as she gets ready for swimming class.

Is premature exposure to opposite-sex anatomy the kind of conservative value we really want to embrace? Conservatives are often accused of waging a war on women. How will our engagement of this issue affect that perception? A violation of privacy is in itself an injury. How can we teach our daughters that their "no means no" when people call them bigots for not wanting to share their showers with men?

Gelernter far too casually dismisses legitimate safety concerns, claiming that predators intent on doing harm will always find a way regardless of the law. He's right about that. But we don't need to roll out a welcome mat for them or make it easier than it already is. The primary component of any safety plan is prevention. Teaching women to ignore red flags and disregard boundaries is not only psychologically harmful; it's actually dangerous.

As a survivor of sexual trauma (that occurred in a shower, no less), I am unwilling to share my locker rooms with men not from mere discomfort. It's a matter of safety.

Women don't fear transgender people in their spaces; they fear males, and they fear them with good cause. When society determines that people with beards and male genitalia are female (if they so choose), how is a woman supposed to tell the difference between a transwoman and a predator until it's too late? My unwillingness to share my locker rooms with men isn't a matter of mere discomfort. It's a matter of safety.

Leftist-media dogma insists that transgender individuals are in imminent danger if they lack access to their preferred restrooms, but the data fail to support this claim. Where are the police reports of trans people being assaulted or harmed as a result of being forced into the "wrong" bathroom? Here's a hint: There are none.

Conversely, week after week, new reports of [male voyeurism in women's bathrooms](#) flood the newsfeed. There were three this past week alone. It's an epidemic. Women need clearer boundaries and increased protection, not ambivalence and a free-for-all. The data consistently show that [99 percent of sexual crimes against females were committed by males](#).

When the data change, then maybe we can have a discussion about whether or not anatomy matters. I won't be holding my breath. In the meantime, it's hard to overstate the significance of anatomy. Anatomy is why girls are trained to never to walk alone at night, to carry pepper spray, to use a buddy system. Like skin color, biological sex is not something one can peel off at the end of the day, or paint on with liquid eyeliner and fishnets. Anatomy is what puts women on the losing end of the power differential almost every single time.

And speaking of the power differential: Gender-identity politics carry deeply troubling implications for women's sports. Is it really okay for Fallon Fox, a transwoman, to compete against females, hitting one of them so hard that it shattered her eye socket and [ended her career](#)? Is it okay for a biological male to claim the [\\$500 first prize in a woman's marathon](#)? When do women ever win in this equation? Are there any women in the NFL? The NBA? MLB? Has anyone actually thought this through? Research from the Women's Sports Foundation indicates that female athletes already receive 63,000 fewer opportunities at NCAA institutions than males do, and we receive \$183 million less in NCAA athletic scholarships. We can't afford to relinquish our coveted spots to men, nor should anyone ask us to.

And let's talk about women's shelters. According to research published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [as many as 57 percent of the women in shelters report domestic violence](#) as the primary cause of their homelessness. In short, they sought shelter to escape dangerous men. What does it look like when those men are allowed to claim female "gender identity" and follow them in? Are people still unaware of [Christopher Hambrook](#), the Canadian man who claimed to be transgender in order to access two separate women's shelters before sexually assaulting a woman in each?

Does a woman, ever in her life, have the right to exist in a space without the presence of a male? Where can she go if not even shelters can offer safety? The problem with transgender rights is that, too often, they erase the hard-earned rights of biological women. Without legislation to prevent the further erosion of our protections, we will lose these protections completely. Unelected bureaucratic agencies, whenever possible, will continue to impose “anti-discrimination” ordinances without bothering to get input from the people they affect. This isn’t progress or equality or even freedom. It’s exploitation and regression. It’s the kind of backwards thinking that defines the worst stereotypes about conservatism. We can and must do better. Anyone complicit in erasing the rights and protections of girls and women is on the wrong side of history. That’s not a conservative value.

Read more at:

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/443534/conservatives-defend-women-oppose-transgender-bathrooms-showers>

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