

Feminist organizations oppose Premier Smith's reckless proposed restrictions on the rights, freedoms, and medical care of trans youth and their families

February 15, 2024 – We, the undersigned, strongly condemn the Government of Alberta's planned changes to gender-affirming care, education, and sports in the province. These changes amount to an attack on trans people, and in particular trans youth.

On January 31, 2024, the Premier of Alberta announced sweeping policy changes that will disproportionately impact trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse youth. The changes include restricting and/or blocking access to gender-affirming care for minors, requiring parental opt-in for sex education related to gender identity and expression, and requiring parental consent for name and pronoun changes at school.

As feminist and gender equality organizations, we recognize that feminism is deeply interconnected with trans liberation – supporting the rights of trans, non-binary, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people is essential to protecting ALL women from violence and discrimination.

The facts are stark and clear; trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse youth in Canada face rates of suicidality, self-harm, anxiety, and depression up to five times higher than same-aged cisgender youth. Trans youth aged 14-18 are the most at risk of experiencing mental health concerns. Supportive school environments, supportive communities, gender-affirming care, and comprehensive sexual education all contribute to improved safety and wellbeing for trans youth—and Alberta's proposed changes threaten all these protective factors.

Premier Smith's proposed intrusion into the health care choices of Albertan youth is not neutral, and the proposed changes are not in the best interests of Albertan youth and their families.

We join medical associations across Canada in expressing our concerns about the considerable negative health outcomes that will arise from banning or restricting access to gender-affirming care. Timely gender-affirming care has been widely associated with significant improvements in mental health concerns among trans youth.

Alberta's announcement is part of an alarming trend of provincial governments throughout Canada infringing the rights of trans youth. This is connected to a wider, coordinated movement to attack gender justice and reproductive rights globally. This movement aims to politicize the health and safety concerns of women, trans, and non-binary people for political gain. Essential medical care and basic rights should not be politicized.

We commit to supporting the rights and autonomy of trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse youth and people. We are in solidarity with trans advocates, organizations, and movements leading the charge of defending those rights.

We strongly urge Premier Smith to abandon the proposed policies announced on January 31. We also call on governments across Canada to prioritize protecting the rights and health of trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse youth.

Amid a global backlash against gender justice and trans liberation, we need policymakers to strengthen protections for trans youth and trans communities, not erode them.

SIGNED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada
Abortion Support Services Atlantic
AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia
Amnesty International Canada English Speaking Section
Anti-Heroine Media
Canadian alliance for sex work law reform
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)
Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Canadian Women's Foundation
Centre for Gender Advocacy
Child Care Now
Child Care Now Coalition of Saskatchewan
Divergenres
ElevateHER Mental Health Support Services Canada
Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia

End Sexual Violence NL
Ending Violence Association of Canada
Ernestine's
Faye Peterson House
The Feminist Campaign School
Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances (FQPN)
Gender Affirming Care Nova Scotia
Gender Creative Kids Canada/Jeunes identités créatives
Halifax Sexual Health Centre
Hiatus House
Interval House maison interval d'Ottawa
Jeunesse Lambda
Kingston Interval House
La Coalition des Groupes Jeunesse LGBTQ+
La Débrouille
Labrador West Status of Women
LGBT+ Family Coalition
Mattawa Women's Resource Centre
Mokami Status of Women Council
Momentum Canada
NAF Canada
North Shore Women's Centre
OCTEVAW
Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
Out On Screen
Oxfam Canada
Planned Parenthood NL Sexual Health Centre
Sexual Health Nova Scotia
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
South Shore Sexual Health
St. John's Status of Women Council / St. John's Women's Centre
Stella, l'amie de Maimie
Tall Tree Psychology
Trafficking & Exploitation Services System
TRAPs mtl
Unifor
West Coast LEAF
Women of the Métis Nation / Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak
Women Transforming Cities

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)
Women's Network PEI
Women's Shelters Canada
Women's Centre for Social Justice (WomenatthecentrE)
YW Kitchener-Waterloo
YWCA Canada
YWCA Hamilton
YWCA Metro Vancouver
YWCA Moncton
YWCA Ontario Coalition
YWCA Peterborough Haliburton
YWCA St. John's
YWCA Sudbury