



# Women's Declaration International Annual Report

2022

Women's Declaration International (WDI) is a group of volunteer women from across the globe dedicated to protecting women's sex-based rights. Our volunteers include academics, writers, organizers, activists, and health practitioners, and aim to represent the total breadth of the human female experience.

The Declaration on Women's Sex Based Rights was created by the founders of WDI to lobby nations to maintain language protecting women and girls on the basis of sex rather than "gender" or "gender identity".

Our direct services for women continue to be supported by our team of active volunteer women. Country Contacts are responsible for helping with translation and dissemination of the Declaration in their country, collecting signatures on the declaration, representing their countries interests in lobbying efforts, and providing news and updates about what is happening in their country.

WDI hosts weekly webinars on various issues impacting women globally. WDI share a lot of useful links and resources during our webinars and can be found on the website to download. WDI also has a YouTube channel, on which the previous webinars and talks have been uploaded to watch later, where you can also check out WDI's extensive collection of resources on the topic of gender identity and women's rights. There is also a Feminist Question Time held each Saturday with various guests from all around the globe, specialists in their respective area relating to women's sex-based rights. This can range from topics on Art to legislative change. Each Sunday, we host Radical Feminist Perspectives. This offers women the opportunity to listen to leading feminists discuss theory and politics.

Our website hosts news and articles over the years addressing wide ranging issues across the political and social spectrum. One such is standing with women and girls

(the Turkish Government withdrew from the Istanbul Convention in March 2021) as they demand their government reverse its decision to withdraw from the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

Most recently, in February 2022, WDI hosted the mother of an Ivy League swimmer, affected by the inclusion of men in women and girls' sports, give an account of how the families are not allowed to openly discuss the issue.

WDI also shared the brilliant four- part documentary 'Dysphoric' by Vaishnavi Sundar, which explores the social, medical and institutional construction of gender identity. Her film centres women and girls. It questions why they may feel uncomfortable in their sexed bodies and discusses the harms involved in transitioning. She is an independent filmmaker, feminist, writer, and women's rights activist from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. She is the founder of Women Making Films and Lime Soda Films and WDI Country Contact for India.

On the WDI Youtube channel, we host several interviews with Kara Dansky, a public defender, of whom continues to raise the alarm for the emergency that is protecting women and girls. Kara Dansky is the President of the WDI USA Chapter.

Our work involves public consultation of legislation and proposed changes which could affect women and girls globally. This year, WDI launched a new webinar series - Perspectivas Radicais for the Portuguese language speakers across the globe. The full programme transcript can also be read in English. WDI, our country contacts and our founders regularly respond to consultations on issues involving women's sex-based rights. Some of the consultation responses are listed below;

- WDI UK - submission to the conversion therapy consultation - December 2021
- WDI Australia - Joint NGO Submission to the UN Status on Women - July 2021
- WDI response to UK consultation on women's health - June 2021
- WDI response to UN Special Rapporteur call for evidence on violence against women - April 2021
- WDI response to EU hate crimes consultation - April 2021

- UK WDI submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government on toilet provision for men and women - February 2021
- WDI submission to the UN Report on Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity - February 2021
- Sheila Jeffrey's submission to the UN Report on Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity - February 2021
- UK WDI submission to the WESC on Gender Recognition Act reform - December 2020
- WDI Bahamas submission to the Law Reform and Revision Commission on the CEDAW General Recommendations Bahamas -September 23rd, 2021.
- WDI India submitted a formal communication to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) with concerns regarding the “Inclusion of Transgender Children in School Education: Concerns and Roadmap” Training Material issued by the NCERT on 1st November, 2021.
- WDI India submitted a formal communication to the following departments to oppose a Public Interest Litigation made by a trans identified male to make all hostels in higher education institutions in a southern Indian State "gender neutral": Department of Women & Child Development, Higher Education Department of the State of Karnataka, Directorate of Medical Education, The University Grants Commission, and the National Medical Commission.

Our weekly online webinars are attended by a global feminist and activist audience of between 300-400. We hear from brilliant women speakers and participate in our online chat. The focus is how gender ideology is harming the rights of women and girls. There are recordings of all panels on the WDI YouTube channel or on the Anchor.fm podcast.

WDI will be at the UN for the NGO CSW66 virtual forum. This is the civil society side of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which runs parallel to the official session taking place at the UN Headquarters.

WDI also runs a webinar series, Radical Feminist Perspectives, offering a chance to hear leading feminists discuss radical feminist theory and politics. These take place every Sunday.

WDI provides a weekly newsletter, in which contains articles from our global network, information on international legislation and campaigning work our members are performing in respective countries.

WDI provides links to various campaigns we are involved in including; Keep Prisons single sex, Maya Forstater's court case and action against the Green Party for discrimination against signatories of the declaration. WDI makes statements on the importance of use of language, and the misrepresentation of the Declaration. We have a UN letter writing campaign co-ordinated by WDI signatories/volunteers/activists Maria Binetti and others.

WDI has performed a piece of research into single sex accommodation in hospitals in England and Wales. NHS rules banning mixed-sex hospital wards were broken more times last November 2021, than at any point on record for that month in England. Mixed-sex accommodation breach refers to all patients in sleeping accommodation who have been admitted to hospital. A breach occurs at the point a patient is admitted to mixed-sex accommodation outside the guidance.

- Patients should not normally have to share sleeping accommodation with members of the opposite sex.
- Patients should not have to share toilet or bathroom facilities with members of the opposite sex.
- Patients should not have to walk through an area occupied by patients of the opposite sex to reach toilets or bathrooms; this excludes corridors.
- Women-only day rooms should be provided in mental health inpatient units.

Womens Declaration in the US have bene incredibly active in the political space. In January 2022, thanks to the generosity of our donors—96% of them women—WDI USA volunteers sent a copy of Board President Kara Dansky's *The Abolition of Sex* to every member of Congress. We included personal messages from constituents and supporters in each package, urging Senators and Representatives to read the book and listen to our concerns. In the Senate, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla of California received the most citizen dedications (followed closely by Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York). In the House, Representative Pramila Jayapal of the Seattle area had the most messages, edging out Representative Earl Blumenauer of the Portland area by

just one constituent. Supporters around the country wrote clearly and forcefully in support of sex-based rights.

On March 2, 2022, WDI USA submitted an oral and written statement concerning anticipated rule changes to the Title IX implementing regulations. Our position is that these regulations do not require any changes other than to add a coherent definition of the word sex to protect women and girls as a sex class in the educational arena.

Article 9 of the Declaration reaffirms the need for the protection of the rights of the child. Citing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration provides that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all legislation concerning children:

*States should recognize that medical interventions aimed at the 'gender reassignment' of children by the use of puberty suppressing drugs, cross-sex hormones and surgery do not serve the best interests of children. Children are not developmentally competent to give full, free and informed consent to such medical interventions, which carry a high risk of long-term adverse consequences to the physical and psychological health of the child, and which may result in permanent adverse consequences, such as sterility. States should prohibit the use of such medical interventions upon children.*

WDI USA has developed a model bill to prohibit procedures intended to disguise the sex of children. We believe it would accomplish the intended purpose of safeguarding children against these harmful practices, while also being consistent with the sex-based rights of women to be free of harmful sex-role stereotypes. WDI USA would strongly support such bills.

### **Congress Giving Women Abortion Rights While Erasing Women**

The first federal legislation in U.S. history granting women a right to abortion is pending before the U.S. Congress. It passed in the House of Representatives in September 2021 and is now before the Senate. On February 28, 2022, Senate Democrats failed to advance the bill but the bill is still alive and can be amended.

If it passes and the President signs it, every U.S. woman will be able to take a breath of relief that no state law can force her to bear a child against her will. Having a woman's right to abortion codified in federal legislation, enforceable in every state, is a crucial milestone for women's rights.

Article 3 of the Declaration reaffirms women's rights to physical and reproductive integrity. It is the position of WDI USA that a woman's bodily integrity includes the right to abortion on demand, for any reason or no reason, up to time of birth, because all her body parts and their contents are subject exclusively to her control. A bill is pending in the U.S. Congress called the Global Respect Act. The U.S. chapter of Women's Declaration International (WDI USA) is gravely concerned that this legislation, if enacted, will be used to bar feminists all over the world from entering the United States. The purpose of this paper is to explain the reasoning behind this concern. Stateside, the Global Respect Act passed in the House of Representatives in February 2022 and is now before the Senate. The American GRA is not the same as the U.K. GRA – it does not, for example, create a “gender recognition certificate” – but we believe that it is not a coincidence that its acronym is GRA. The American GRA has gotten almost no media attention. The Human Rights Campaign loves it, as do the President and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but most media outlets simply aren't covering it.

A thorough analysis of how this bill might impinge on the Bill of Rights, other Constitutional provisions, and the rest of U.S. existing law would be a worthy endeavor. For example, the First Amendment rights to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association might be implicated, as well as the Fourth Amendment right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. The bill also arguably gives the President unchecked power, which could invoke the Separation of Powers doctrine. The purpose of this paper is simply to call attention to the bill itself and to WDI USA's concerns with it, and to make it known to Declaration signatories all over the world that Representative David Cicilline does not want us here.

WDI USA thinks that this is without question one of the most anti-woman and authoritarian pieces of legislation that we have seen in our lifetimes. We speculate that it is intended to target Declaration signatories all over the world, and their

families, and to bar them from entering the United States, and possibly worse. Even if that is not its intention, it will almost certainly be used to target Declaration signatories if it becomes law. We speculate that U.S. signatories could be targeted as well, by alleging that we are operating as “agents” of Declaration signatories outside the United States. We are proud to stand with our sisters all over the world and we refuse to bow down to this blatantly authoritarian, patriarchal attempt to silence and punish women for fighting for the sex-based rights of women and girls.

The Feminist Legal Clinic based in Australia, have been involved in a number of presentations surrounding International Women’s Day and our Principal Solicitor was also honoured to be awarded the Eva Bacon Award by the IWD Meanjin committee in Queensland, although unable to make it to Brisbane for the event. Some of the case work includes the following: In the Tasmanian Case of Jessica Hoyle v Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, we are defending the right of lesbians to hold events that exclude males. The final hearing was adjourned awaiting a decision of the High Court clarifying the jurisdictional powers of the Tribunal. The Feminist Legal Clinic have also been recruited to join the international Hague Mother’s project recently established by FiLiA.

WDI Brasil have been working towards women’s rights issues namely the requirement in 2021 to Brazilian federal attorney in order to protect single-sex spaces regarding *prisons and similar institutions* as well as requirement to Brazilian federal attorney in 2022 in order to protect single-sex spaces regarding *hospitals and similar institutions*. as psychiatric wards.

WDI Brasil also created a report in 2022, about the impact of "gender identity" politics in the rights of women and girls in Brasil. This report was made in support of WDI Scotland’s local actions and uploaded on WDI International’s website at the link of resources.