

ARLINGTON PARENT COALITION

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March 13, 2021

We would like to offer our response to the International Expert's SOGI inquiry. Our organization's membership is a growing and diverse community of individuals, inclusive of those who have experienced nonbinary sexual identity and those whose family or friends do. Our concern is the unjust infringement by public schools into the individual's freedom of expression, including how that freedom is protected by parents for the benefit of the child.

We all share the expectation that our publicly funded K-12 school system will prepare our children to profitably engage in the world's marketplace of ideas as they continue with university and trade school or proceed directly into the workplace. This expectation rests on the shared understanding that public schools exist to serve the student, the success of which by necessity rests on the cooperation of the school with the child's parents to bring about the best academic interest of the child, preparing each child to uniquely contribute to the prospering of the human condition.

What our organization continues to see is the weakening (arguably deliberate) of the public school system's ability to withstand pressure exerted by some to diminish the parent-school tie so that schools are no longer accountable to parents for preparing children in their development of rigorous disciplines needed to learn. Rather, public schooling in our area is quickly devolving into dispensaries of novel concepts presented as widely agreed upon binding truths. These flawed ideas come with devastating practical consequences for all students and their families, teachers and the community.

Members of our organization and the wider community continue to reject these efforts. To this end, we continue to recognize and oppose the force behind the attack on children and their academic development entering through the public school system to impose on children ideas shared by a few. These ideas have been and continue to be proven bankrupt to individuals who are free to evaluate ideologies on the basis of what is good and true, as demonstrated by rigorous examination. We recognize further that efforts undertaken by public schools to replace the learning process with compelled adherence to flawed ideology can only happen when the public school system willingly views parents as obstacles to their child's education, rather than to recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children, especially to help them evaluate and challenge competing ideas.

Practically, the UN's interest in promoting SOGI must be subordinated to these parent and child rights long recognized by the UN Human Rights Convention on the Rights of the Child. Consequently, we believe that all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, are entitled to dignity and respect and we recognize that this necessarily means that

school aged girls are entitled to their own private and protected spaces and, so, must be assured that boys, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, may not have the right to access girls' restrooms and changing spaces or be able to compete against girls in athletics.

That the UN Human Rights Commission has directed the International Expert to examine how state institutions, like public education systems, impede the flourishing of SOGI is regarded by us (and many) as the same unveiled attempt to accomplish internationally what some well funded organizations are doing in our community: to impose ideas that continue to fail when tested on nearly every social, scientific and academic rubric. Arlington Parent Coalition members continue to reject the oppressive efforts to impose rigid and flawed sexual orientation and gender identity concepts that cannot survive the same rigorous examination expected of all ideas. Such ideological and practical imposition puts at risk a child's social, emotional and physical well being, and necessarily involves disrupting the child's access to meaningful engagement of ideas by cutting out parents as principal partners in public school education, and by threatening students and teachers who disagree with SOGI with disciplinary action, all of which violates the individual's right to freedom of expression recognized in the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

Submitted by the Arlington Parent Coalition