



THE COUNTESS

3 June 2025

By email

An Taoiseach Micheál Martin

Micheál, a chara

The Countess is a group of progressive women and men from all walks of life including doctors, lawyers, consultants, and students. We are volunteer-led, self-funded and not affiliated with any political party or religion. We are apolitical and non-partisan. Our mission is to promote and protect the rights of the women and children of Ireland. The Countess Campaign [These Words Belong to Us](#) was instrumental in getting the word “woman” retained in Irish maternity legislation, and we ran an influential “No, No” campaign during the 2024 Referenda.

In the last 2 years we have also been invited to participate in consultations/policy development with:

- Sport Ireland for the development of the Guidance for Transgender and Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport
- The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Sport
- The Irish Prison Service

Our current focus is on highlighting the unintended consequences of the *Gender Recognition Act* 2015 (e.g. the placing of men in women’s prisons and homeless shelters) and the widespread adoption of this unproven gender ideology belief system into Irish life. We believe that most reasonable people agree that there are obvious issues in allowing men to identify into female spaces, sports, and services. This has been shown in several independent polls conducted in the last 4 years by the Countess, Newstalk radio and the Sunday Independent newspaper. Our RedC poll in June 2021 revealed that less than one in five agreed with the premise of gender self ID.

The Countess, its volunteers, the vast majority of its 22,000 followers across social media, and the overwhelming majority of the population of Ireland do not believe in gender identity ideology and resoundingly rejected the government’s attempts to remove the words mother and woman from the Irish Constitution in the March 2024 referenda. They also understand that the insidious pushing of gender identity ideology on the Irish people undermines the attainment of true equality between the sexes as it removes women’s rights to single-sex spaces and sport and allows men to claim accolades and opportunities meant for women only. The skewing of statistics (e.g. crime, health, business, education, census) that occurs when sex is not recorded accurately further undermines attempts to achieve equality between the sexes.

You may have noted the recent UK Supreme Court Ruling (16th April 2025) which clarified that: “*the terms woman and sex in the Equality Act 2010 refer to a biological woman and biological sex*”. It also noted a person with a Gender Recognition Certificate in the female gender “does not come within the definition of a ‘woman’ under the Equality Act”.

Ireland’s Equal Status Act 2000 (“the Act”) defines the “gender ground” as male and female, this is clearly based on sex (section 3(2)). The Act allows single sex spaces and employers can discriminate based on sex where privacy or embarrassment is at stake, such as in toilets or changing rooms (section 5 (2) (g):

“differences in the treatment of persons on the gender ground where embarrassment or infringement of privacy can reasonably be expected to result from the presence of a person of another gender”

Currently in Ireland, however, several “women’s” organisations and services include trans-identifying men (also called transwomen) in their definition of women, resulting in males being allowed into spaces that are meant to be single-sex, e.g. women’s refuges, homeless hostels, prisons, workplace toilets and changing rooms, and sports changing facilities, and some sports e.g. LGFA. This has resulted in an air of uncertainty about whether the Act includes trans-identifying men in its definition of women. Unfortunately, the onus is now on women to bring an expensive and potentially lengthy court case to test the meaning of the word woman in the Act: is it biological sex or is it now based on gender identity? The original meaning was clearly based on biological sex before gender identity became *en vogue* and before the introduction of the Gender Recognition Act in 2015, which happened without appropriate due diligence and risk assessment of the impact on women and girls.

The Countess expects the UK court decision to have “an authoritative and persuasive” effect on any similar Irish case testing how laws protecting transgender rights interact with equality legislation for biological women. In the mainstream media it has been acknowledged and reported that Irish courts are likely to rely on the UK Supreme Court case.

The government must clarify, and amend if necessary, legislation (either the Act or the GRA) to state that women’s protective rights apply to those born female only. The Equality Act section 5 (2) (g) was drafted to protect women and girls from having males in their spaces, including toilets, changing rooms, refuges, and prisons. Women should not have to again fight to ensure these rights are protected, when the government has the power to issue statutory guidance or amend legislation in line with not only the apex decision of our neighbouring jurisdiction but also with public opinion. Excluding access to the services meant for the opposite sex from the scope of the effect of s.18 of the GRA would bring it back in line with Goodwin and Foy, the two test cases which gave rise to the GRA in the first instance. Activists and hardliners have dictated to Ministers for too long on this issue. It is time to listen to reason and do the right thing.

We suggest that we meet with you and your department to discuss this important issue and how it impacts on your department.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Is muide, le meas

Laoise de Brún BL

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