

Texas Considers Passing the Women's Privacy Act

Last week, the Texas Senate took up consideration of Senate Bill 6, otherwise known as the Women's Privacy Act, a bill that was pushed by Lt. Governor Dan Patrick.

SB 6 was introduced by state Sen. Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham), who was first elected in a special election in 2014. The legislation, if adopted, requires that all people must use the bathroom that matches their biological sexes.

For people who identify as transgender, particularly in schools, single-stall restrooms may be set up on a case-by-case basis. Public facilities that can be occupied by more than one person, however, would be required to comply with the new requirements, if they are signed into law.

"This issue is not about discrimination—it's about public safety, protecting businesses and common sense," Patrick said. "I congratulate Sen. Kolkhorst for filing SB 6 and for her commitment to protecting the privacy of Texans and keeping them safe."

Additionally, SB 6 prevents political subdivisions—cities, towns and counties—from forcing private entities, including contractors, to open their showers, locker rooms and bathrooms to people of the opposite sex. It leaves private entities free to determine their own policies regarding the use of shared bathrooms and showers.

Last month, U.S. District Court Judge Reed O'Connor in the Northern District of Texas ordered the Obama Administration stop enforcing its "transgender mandate" on public schools, federal agencies, municipalities and private employers. The judge's opinion states the federal government must stop using "gender" in lieu of the term "sex" in federal statutes such as

Title VII and Title IX.

Liberty Counsel has offered or provided pro bono assistance in 24 states regarding “bathroom bills” and religious liberty/LGBT issues in order to protect women and children. Its founder and chairman, Mat Staver, issued the following statement:

Liberty Counsel commends Lt. Gov. Patrick and Sen. Kolkhorst for introducing the Woman’s Privacy Act in order to protect the women residents and visitors of Texas. These legislators are upholding their responsibility to protect the privacy, safety and dignity of citizens in intimate settings like showers and locker rooms, where persons will be in various stages of undress. It is common sense that no one should expect young girls or women to undress and be exposed to males in public facilities.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins released the following statement:

Family Research Council is pleased to support the Women’s Privacy Act because it protects students in public schools from having their privacy threatened in bathrooms and showers while allowing reasonable accommodations for students who may choose not to use multi-use facilities. This commonsense bill is also needed because it stops government from forcing private entities, including contractors, to open their showers, locker rooms and bathrooms to people of the opposite sex, instead allowing them to choose their own policies.

The Women’s Privacy Act is needed because the government, at the federal, state and local level, has taken unprecedented steps redefining “sex” to include “gender identity,” threatening the privacy and safety of people—especially women and girls—in showers and bathrooms. Some public-school districts, including two in Texas, at the encouragement of

the Obama administration, are ignoring privacy and safety concerns and attempting to adopt policies that force boys and girls to shower together, stay together on school trips and use the same locker rooms and bathrooms.

What we were taught in kindergarten, boys use the boys' room and girls use the girls' room, has been made old-school by liberal bureaucrats. This is commonsense legislation, which should never have been needed. {eoa}