

Nicole Jones

I've been speaking on this topic for four years, so you can imagine I'm very unpopular among my peer group. There are many women who have been speaking up for far longer. Feminists warned us in the seventies.

Until recently, we were isolated voices, so it's reassuring to see so many people united here today to support women's sex-based rights — formerly known as **women's rights**.

The Equality Act allows for single-sex spaces. Yes, toilets. But also prisons. Refuges. It recognises women's right to dignity and privacy and it recognises that the most vulnerable women have the right to spaces free from those most likely to victimise them.

How are the most vulnerable women expected to be able to come forward with these test cases?

It allows for lawful discrimination for jobs in which it is appropriate for the position to be held by a woman.

It protects homosexuality as same-sex attraction.

We are lucky in the UK to have these rights. It is part of the reason the resistance to GRA reform has been so strong.

Recently, Canada's oldest rape crisis centre lost its funding due to its policy on only serving biological women.

The Scottish government has recently clarified that use of single-sex exemptions does not remove eligibility for funding. So why are women's groups and services not implementing them?

Perhaps they believe it is costless. That trans individuals are few and far between, so it doesn't really matter.

But GRA reform will open these spaces up to anyone who can fill in a form and wait six months. It will be a green light for predators.

It will allow teenagers to change their legal sex. We will see the already growing number of detransitioners increase.

It will criminalise false declarations. How will this be proven? How will this be enforced? Abusers of the system can just claim detransition.

We all have the right to expression and freedom of assembly. To ask freedom for women is not a crime. To discuss laws is not prejudice.

Women's rights need strengthening — not trampling with GRA reform. If this bill goes ahead it will be a disaster. Lesbians and gay men have warned you. Detransitioners have warned you. Transexuals have warned you.

But ultimately, women have warned you. And we feminists really are sick of being right all the time.

I will finish with the words of Magdalen Berns, who should have been here today.

“If only a few splintered female voices are powerful enough to shake the foundations of male supremacist order, such that it aggressively seeks to silence us, think what more women can achieve, united.”