

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Corrections
For HB 3147

Compiled on: Monday, April 24, 2023 10:38 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 24, 2023 11:00 AM

Jeff Ray
Self
Round Rock, TX
Support

Hang Le
Self
Round Rock, TX
I support

Hillary Anderson, RN
self, retired RN
Austin, TX

It is critical that female prisoners be protected from male prisoners claiming to be transgender. Biological men should NEVER be allowed contact or reside with female prisoners, or juveniles. Texas needs to step forward and protect women by insuring their safety while incarcerated. Please insure their safety with this important legislation. Hillary Anderson, Austin, TX

Jessica Pryor
Self
Round Rock, TX
SUPPORT

Emma Ray
Self
Round Rock, TX
Support

Hung Le
Self
Round Rock, TX

I support

Dene Miller, Mrs
Self
Corpus Christi, TX

Absolutely housing based on biological sex! How can a female protect herself when locked in a cell with no protection!

Patricia Moore
"self" Retired Teacher Alief ISD/ currently Alief ISD substitute teacher
Houston, TX

I urge you to vote YES on HB3147.
Courts have repeatedly recognized that a correctional system has a right to ensure women are protected from sexual abuse and physical violence, as well as have equal access to all inmate rights, correctional programs, and opportunities for rehabilitation. The purpose of the Act (HB3147) is to further the governmental interest of ensuring that females detained in adult or juvenile correctional facilities are protected throughout their sentence and have equal, safe access to basic facilities afforded to prisoners.

Leslie Winters
Self and all women in the state of Texas
Round Rock, TX

I support this bill and you should to. Do the right thing for women and cot in favor of this bill.

Tara Strain
Self
Lago Vista, TX

I support!

Melissa Pemberton
Self
Round Rock, TX

It doesn't make sense to allow men into women's prisons regardless of how mentally ill the man in question is.

Linda Avila
self
Round Rock, TX

please support this bill.

Renate Sims
Self
Round Rock, TX

Please vote FOR this bill. Being a woman is a birthright and comes with unique vulnerabilities that deserve protection, especially in intimate spaces and when incarcerated.

Sylvia Coulson
Self
Waxahachie, TX

I strongly support this bill. We must protect the women in the prisons from rape by men.

Cathy Greenall
Self
Round Rock, TX

I support.

Jeanne Mixon
Self retired
Pflugerville, TX

This bill is very concerning to me. I fear that the unintended consequences of placing transgender inmates in cells based on their birth gender will cause an unstable violent atmosphere in our Texas prison system. I feel certain the Texas legislature does not intend to make Texas prisons any more difficult to manage than they are already and that Texas legislators do not want to be responsible for increased inmate on inmate violence, but I fear that this bill would lead to increased beatings and deaths in the prison system. I am sure that the Texas Department of Corrections does not want to deal with the chaos that this bill would inspire. Please vote no on this bill for the safety of the inmates and the children in the criminal justice system.

Isabel Ray
self; communications
Austin, TX

I oppose HB3147. Incarcerated people should be housed based on their gender.

Chris Donofrio

Self / Transgender activist

The Woodlands, TX

I strongly oppose HB 3147.

I urge you to kill it in committee.

As a member of the trans community, I'm appalled by the cruelty of this bill.

As a proud Texan, I'm embarrassed that our legislature would contemplate such a bill.

I cry every time people who support such legislation speak about protecting women from men.

You misunderstand so badly.

Your lack of understanding results in prison-related violence against those of us trying to lead the life our genetics dealt us.

It also promotes violence and discrimination in general for something we cannot change about ourselves.

With hope that I can change some minds, or at least help improve your understanding of us, I need to say the following.

First, we are the least likely people to behave the way you believe.

Do women enter bathrooms to sexually groom or take advantage of other women and girls, or want to be imprisoned with men?

You've always known the answers.

Men may enter bathrooms with nefarious intent. Trans women do not. We only want to be in a safe space.

The same is true with prisons. We fear for our lives when just thinking about it.

Second, a person's "sex" is not only a function of outward appearance, or even the presence of a Y-chromosome. Consequently, it is possible, and far more probable than many think, for someone to be mis-sexed at birth. What is noted on a birth certificate is not the final word on a person's "sex." Or gender identity.

I refer you to Marianne J. Legato, 2020, "The plasticity of sex: The molecular biology and clinical features of genomic sex, gender identity and sexual behavior," especially chapters 4 and 8.

Current research has established that at least 6 genes are involved in gender identity: CYP17, ER-alpha, ER-beta, AR chromosome 22, AR chromosome 23, and SRD5A2. Only AR chromosome 23 is located on the Y-chromosome (chromosome 23).

So, what about that AR chromosome 23 gene? Gian-Paolo Dotto wrote in his 2019 EMBO Molecular Medicine paper, "Gender and sex - Time to bridge the gap," the following. "inactivating mutations of the AR gene, or the gene encoding for the enzyme involved in testosterone modification (5-alpha reductase) result in individuals with a non-binary or female phenotype **EVEN IN THE PRESENCE OF AN XY GENOTYPE AND TESTOSTERONE PRODUCING TESTICLES** [caps added by me]."

Third, It's easy to equate "sex" with "gender identity." For most people they are congruent. But not for us. The focus on our "sex" is irrelevant. Our gender identity, genetically determined, makes us who we are. Our "sex" just becomes a tool to promote hate against, discrimination of, objectification of, and dehumanization of us.

In the end we are all defined by our genes and they do not create a gender binary.

We don't want an exception to rules. We only want to be allowed to live by the same rules as everyone else. To be treated with dignity and respect. Our fears relieved. To be seen as ordinary humans, just like you.

Respectfully,

Chris J. Donofrio

Pam Sohan
Self/Mom
New Braunfels, TX

I urge you to vote against this bill. It would subject trans gender individuals to harassment and possible violence. Incarcerating them according to the sex on their birth certificate would jeopardize their safety while in jail/prison. It would subject them to increased mental anguish to be forced to once again have to deny their true selves.

Donna Tucker, Mrs.
NONE
Round Rock, TX
I SUPPORT

Bettie Gray
Self/customer service
Waxahachie, TX

Jail and prison inmates should be housed according to their biological anatomy. How a person who has committed a crime identifies their gender should not determine where they're housed.
Transgendered people "know" they're a different gender by how they "feel". Well, the crime they committed was also because of their uncontrollable feelings and obviously committing a crime was wrong.
Biological men with men and biological women with women. If a woman or a man need to defend themselves while incarcerated, they are more likely to be able to handle the assailant more readily if they are of the same biological gender. A transgendered male will always be stronger than a biological female. Protect female inmates and prisoners from predators.

Tom Nobis
Self -retired
Houston, TX
I am For HB3147

Taylor Trevino
self
Austin, TX

I strongly urge legislators to oppose this bill.

Eric Kunish, Chair
National Alliance on Mental Illness-Central Texas Affiliate
Austin, TX

We do NOT support this bill! It could endanger the inmate.

Cathy Edminster
Myself
Maypearl, TX

Prisons should ALWAYS be segregated by gender...the gender God assigned at birth!!

Mindy Ratcliff
Self
Round Rock, TX

I support this!

Dianne Landrum Sanford

Self

Waxahachie, TX

To allow males , pretending to be females, into female prisons or jails, is to allow real females to be at risk of rape. This is irresponsible and dangerous, to allow. Stand up to the reprehensible Woke voices!

Kelly Anderson

Self

Henderson, TX

Please stop following the money and place inmates according to their biological sex. This is the healthiest option for all. This erasing of gender importance is really wearing in most Texans.

Thomas Parkinson

Self

San Antonio, TX

Sexual assaults are quite common in prisons. Inmates should be assigned to prisons based on their biological sex at birth.

KAY WEBB

self

Round Rock, TX

I SUPPORT THIS BILL

William Ross Pumfrey

Self -- retired

AUSTIN, TX

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 3147.

Transgender individuals deserve our respect and, in cases like detainment, compassion and humane treatment. We can't bury our heads in the sand regarding the spectrum of sexual identity that is now recognized. My discussions with people knowledgeable in this field have left me very worried about attempts it insist on "sex at birth" and "biological sex."

Thank you for your attention.

Meaghan Bihun

self - non-profit education

San Antonio, TX

I stand in opposition to HB 3147. This bill is needlessly cruel, purporting to address women being treated as "second class citizens" while excluding some Texas women from consideration and humane treatment. The Prison Policy Initiative tells us that 5,000 transgender individuals are incarcerated in state prisons across the United States and we know little about their experiences because appropriate information is not collected on these experiences. This bill ignores the lived experience of many transgender women in Texas, who experience sexual assault, trafficking, and assault at rates two to three times higher than other Texas women - women who will now be forced to be housed with men who are in prison for a variety of crimes, including sexual assault. The reliance, in the event of a dispute between the manual examination of a person's body and the recorded sex at birth only if recorded at the time of birth, on birth certificates violates the spirit and intent of federal guidance that requires an interview to determine the best housing option for a particular person. This bill would force men, many of whom have the physical characteristics that Rep Slawson seem to be concerned about, to be housed with women, as transgender men exist. Of course, the cruelty of forcing women to be housed with men is the point of Rep Slawson's bill - an inhumane, small-minded, and truly shameful goal. I could go into the statistics on how affirmative gender practices improve mental health, recidivism, and integration into society but it seems that the motivation of this bill would ignore those facts, as it seeks to violate even the spirit of guidance already in place to address these issues.

Protect all Texans as they seek rehabilitation in our Texas Criminal Justice System.

Roy Getting

Myself

Irving, TX

Keep all prisons single sex by biological sex

Sarah Phillips

Self

Plano, TX

I oppose this bill.

Kathy Ponce

Self

Mayprarl, TX

I support this bill. Women have the right to be in a women only facility. Just look to other states where transgender men are allowed to be in womens facilities. The stories of rape are horrifying. Those blue states, such as CA, care more about how someone feels that protecting women to serve their time in some honor and dignity.

Christie Macias

Self

Georgetown, TX

We must protect the basic safety of biological women. This is not an issue of gender identity but one of basic safety based on criminals willing to physically harm another. Please protect biological women and provide basic safety by voting to keep inmates separated by biological sex.

Shannon Doyle

National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter

Austin, TX

Like numerous other anti-trans bills, the name of this bill is misleading. If the intention is to protect women, then all this bill does is cause more harm. As social workers, we work with individuals and communities in a variety of spaces, including prisons and juvenile detention centers, and are called to support those experiencing abuse, violence, and discrimination. So, I'd like to talk about why this bill actually fails to protect anyone.

Supporters of this bill might argue that men could falsely claim to be transgender so they are housed with women they can then assault, but there is no evidence to support that this happens. Meanwhile, there is overwhelming evidence that trans women in men's prisons are being sexually assaulted at exponentially higher rates than the general prison population. According to a survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality, incarcerated trans people are over nine times more likely than the prison average to be assaulted by fellow prisoners, and over five times more likely to be assaulted by prison staff.

Trans people are already incarcerated at alarmingly high rates, especially Black trans women. Black trans women face a tremendous amount of violence, racism, and transphobia in everyday life, and even more so inside prisons. Forcing them to endure inevitable abuse and discrimination by placing them inside a men's prison is cruel, and does nothing to protect them.

Almost 30 years ago, the Supreme Court case *Farmer v Brennan* found that deliberately failing to protect incarcerated trans people from abuse or violence behind bars qualifies as cruel and unusual punishment. Jumping forward 3 decades, HB 3147 not only fails to protect trans people, but actively puts them in greater danger and general unease.

On that note, considering that trans men who would be forced to reside in women's prisons is equally questionable. I happen to have a friend, who I'll call Sam, who is a trans man. He has a shaved head and a full beard and has had chest surgery, and has many masculine features. No one questions the fact that he is a man. Though, if he were convicted of a crime in Texas, he'd be sent to a women's prison, simply because he has an 'F' on his birth certificate. This would not only make him feel widely uncomfortable to be in that position; it would also most likely make the women feel uncomfortable to share a facility with a person who looks, acts, sounds like a man, because he is a man.

This bill would only cause additional harm, and it goes against the federal standard of determining on a case-by-case basis where inmates should be housed.

I recognize that I am not a trans person, nor have I ever been incarcerated so I don't have lived experience of this, but I urge you to speak with and listen to those who have. Nobody should be in danger just because they are behind bars, which is why I hope you will consider what I've talked about today and not be blindsided by ignorance. Thank you.

Gina Milligan

self

Austin, TX

I support this bill.

Hearing Date: April 24, 2023 11:00 AM

Stephanie Hughes

Self

Round rock, TX

I support this bill.

Lenora Greene

self

Austin, TX

Support. Please protect women/biological females

Kieu Trang

Self

Round Rock, TX

I support.

Deborah Taff

self/homemaker

Salado, TX

I am writing in support of this bill. Just the possibility that a biological male might pose a threat to even ONE imprisoned female should be enough to convince any feeling person that confining prisoners or juvenile detainees together without segregating the biological sexes is a bad idea. One biological male housed with a bunch of females can cause a lot of damage. Conversely, one biological woman housed with male prisoners could suffer tremendously. This bill needs to be passed for the protection of every inmate and detainee.

Denise Ray

Self

Round Rock, TX

SUPPORT