



Canadian Gender Report

The CBC’s gender agenda: A failure of mandate with severe implications

October 19, 2021

Canadian Gender Report is a non-sectarian and non-partisan organization of parents and professionals concerned about the medical treatment of gender-distressed children and adolescents, the introduction of gender identity teaching in our schools, and the changing legal landscape that replaces biological sex with the subjective notion of gender self-identity.

Canadian Gender Report thanks Mark Lehain and the Campaign for Common Sense, a British organization that recently published a similar report about the BBC in the UK. We acknowledge and are grateful for their kind permission to model our report about the CBC in Canada on theirs.

Please note that this report does not cover Radio-Canada or any coverage in French.

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FOREWARD

The debate around rights related to gender arouses much passion. Few institutions in Canada are as well placed as the CBC to facilitate meaningful dialogue among Canadians, dialogue that could cultivate greater understanding for all Canadians on complex issues, thereby promoting respect rather than ignorance, fear, or demonization of “the other.” Sadly, as this Canadian Gender Report analysis will show, when it comes to dealing with gender issues, the CBC is not an impartial observer and is often an active and biased participant.

The CBC’s failure to meet basic journalistic ethics and its own aforementioned mandate is tragic. The CBC exists to inform, educate, and entertain Canadians – not to advocate a particular position in hotly contested issues. And the issues related to the gender self-identity debate are certainly hot and contested. There are complex and significant legal, social, ethical, and political dimensions to the gender identity debate that the CBC seems to be willfully ignoring.

These contested issues are not mere abstractions. The consequences of the gender self-identity debate that the CBC fails to adequately report on include very real consequences for the safety and dignity of children and women, such as who belongs in sex-segregated spaces and the best and most evidence-based treatment options for gender-dysphoric youth due to global research.

Despite the loud protestations of a small number of extremely vocal activists to shut down debate about protections for women and safeguarding measures for children, there remain many critical legal, social, ethical, and political issues that require full public consideration, discourse, and collective solutions. Bullying, silencing, and abusing opponents, which is the current tactic of many activists, is decidedly undemocratic.

We define the “gender identity debate” in terms of the social change being imposed upon Canadians by the adoption of self-declared gender as a replacement for observed biological sex throughout society. The imposition of gender theory in law in Canada is having a profound effect on human interactions and relationships and is transforming social and cultural institutions.

For instance, various changes to add “gender identity and gender expression” to provincial human rights legislation and the federal Bill C-16, which was passed with barely a ripple in the Canadian public consciousness, has led to “self-identification.” Self-ID enables one’s subjective, immeasurable, and unverifiable gender identity to replace sex, another protected characteristic under human rights legislation. The protected characteristic of sex, by contrast, is an objective and scientifically supported classification of humans into an immutable and binary sex class: we are all male or female (even the conditions of intersex individuals are sex-specific). Self-ID allows anyone who claims the inner gender feeling of “being the opposite sex” the legal rights and protections afforded to that biological sex. For instance, self-ID allows any biological man who identifies as a woman into spaces and services designed for biological women.

Self-ID is based on gender theory, the origins of which are rooted in an academic view of social constructivism that is beyond the scope of this report. However, the consequences of negating material reality are being felt across all social spheres of Canadian life: legal, educational, correctional, medical, mental health, education, etc. Gender theory is particularly harmful to vulnerable women (in prisons, shelters, domestic violence safehouses) and children (gender non-confirming children, gay/lesbian youth, children in foster care, children and youth with histories of trauma and complex mental health needs). Gender theory demands that we as a society redefine our language (women, man, female, male, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.), rearrange our understanding of reality (“sex is not real,” “the mythical female”), and provide ideologically driven medical and

psychological care (experimental medical interventions such as puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for children as well as unproven social transition, including changing names and pronouns in K-12 education) to accommodate a few demanding and vocal individuals. Any attempt at a balanced and informed discussion about the appropriateness or efficacy of these changes is often met with the assumption that one is “transphobic” and therefore not supportive of trans people. The result of this social transition being imposed by gender theory smacks of Marxism in its practical effect of separating people into classes of “oppressor” and “oppressed” simply due the position one may take in this debate.

This transformative social change needs to be revealed and understood so that Canadians can be the arbiters of their fate rather than victims of legislation that is not well understood.

The ideological rearrangement of reality is being grappled with by people across Canada and across the political spectrum. Some of the effects of gender theory may affect only tiny numbers of people (for instance, the introduction of biological males into female prisons), but other consequences are far-reaching, affecting all Canadians whether they are male, female, identify with their in-utero observed sex, or if they identify as transgender (for instance, gender theory being taught in schools).

It is our position that the only ethical way forward is to engage in respectful, transparent, open, and democratic processes to address the multiple issues related to the gender identity debate. In today's political climate, which we contend is in no small part stoked by the CBC's failure to do its job, Canadians who question the near total institutional capture by gender theory (at the expense of good faith debate of issues related to gender identity) are met with bullying, abuse, silencing, and smear campaigns both online and in real life. For example, we all saw the extreme reactions to JK Rowling's very measured statements. The list of men and women who have been deplatformed from social media, whose livelihood has been threatened or lost, or who have been forced out of organizations or jobs is long and expanding at a disturbing rate.

As a taxpayer-funded media outlet that purports to represent the entire country, the CBC could and should be playing a pivotal role in helping Canadians find a way to respectfully and collectively address the complex issues related to the gender identity debate. The CBC is uniquely placed in Canadian society to tackle topics that other media outlets are not covering. We hope this report will encourage a more considered, consistent, and balanced approach to gender-related issues by the CBC - for the good of all parts of Canadian society and its future generations.

SITUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The CBC's approach to the contested issue of gender identity is biased, inconsistent, of varying quality, and often unhelpful. Arguments around gender identity issues are heated, people on all sides feel under threat, and divisions in our country seem to be growing wider, not getting better.

It is a debate that the CBC, as Canada's publicly funded national broadcaster, could and should be helping the country to grapple with in a way that generates light, not heat. Yet rather than "inform, educate, and entertain," much of the CBC's output on the topic is making things worse.

Public opinion is overwhelmingly compassionate and tolerant towards people with gender dysphoria, those who are intersex, and others who wish to present their gender to the world in ways different from their birth sex. However, on more difficult and complex aspects – transwomen in women's sports, reporting of crime statistics, female-only spaces, education, pronouns and language usage, and treatment of gender-dysphoric youth - a wide range of views are held among Canadians and opinion is split.

Yet the CBC generally presents the issues as settled and reflects views held by only a minority of the population. It is thus out-of-step with the views of both the wider public and many experts. This causes four main problems:

1. It doesn't fulfil the CBC's requirement to be balanced;
2. It undermines trust in the CBC;
3. It contributes to the erosion of mutual goodwill amongst Canadians by silencing, demonising, or misrepresenting certain views;
4. It contributes to the erosion of various populations' Charter-protected rights.

In this report, we utilize data on public opinion for key gender identity issues and analyze where the CBC deviates from this or fails to acknowledge and support balanced discussion. Frequently, reporting by the CBC on these issues is biased, poorly informed, and at times even patronizing. Often, critically important information related to these issues is not reported at all.

For instance, for young people whose consumption of CBC's output is largely via their youth-orientated content – CBC Kids - it is likely that they will only hear the viewpoints of an extreme minority. Overwhelmingly these views are biased, take an "affirmation-only" approach to the experience of gender dysphoria, endorse identity-based (again undefined) pronoun usage, and promote an ideological not clinical approach to medical transition as treatment for gender confusion. These ideological views of gender confusion or dysphoria are presented using the language of inclusivity, human rights, or simply "being kind to others" (anti-bullying). This blatant misrepresentation does not reflect public opinion nor that of many experts in the field. More importantly, it means that often the people who most need a balanced exploration of the issues are given an activist viewpoint, presented as fact. We thus dedicate an entire subsection to Children and Youth.

This activist slant of the issues arises for several reasons. Policy development has been influenced, and in some cases captured, by unrepresentative interest groups. This capture of policy development is having undue influence on journalists, especially younger, less experienced ones. And being overwhelmingly metropolitan in geography and often activist in worldview, these journalists can be out of touch with the issue as it manifests

itself across wider society. So much of this bias is likely not deliberate - but there has been no attempt to ensure any counterbalance.

Sadly, on the issue of gender identity, CBC is indeed often an activist and partisan player, not an impartial convener. To ensure more balanced output, enhance trust in the CBC, and promote discussions that benefit wider society, we offer the CBC six recommendations:

1. CBC leadership must commission an independent review of the broadcaster's approach to gender self-identity issues and coverage – policies and language usage in particular – to assess the legality, impartiality, and balance of these topics against its obligations to Canadians as a taxpayer-funded organization.
2. CBC leadership must issue a clear statement as to how it intends to fulfill its obligation to impartiality and balance in coverage on the contested issues.
3. Guidance for producers, editors, and reporters must be issued to support them in ensuring output that is balanced, impartial, and informative. When needed, health education should be provided (e.g., how to correctly read and interpret complex medical studies).
4. Historical material must be reviewed for accuracy, balance, and impartiality and, where it fails to meet the standards of impartiality and balance required, must be addressed – through re-editing, or where this is not possible, withdrawal from circulation, with accessible public notifications of the same.
5. For full transparency, the CBC must make public the names and expertise of every person it has used and uses as an advisory referent.
6. If the CBC has a politically motivated LGBT/Pride consultant or board weighing in on editorial issues, then this position or board must be dismissed or disbanded to ensure impartiality and remove conflict of interest. An alternative would be to counterbalance such a position by adding experts who are well-versed in the science and legal ramifications of biological sex as well as those with academic accreditation and a history of peer-reviewed publications.

PUBLIC OPINION

In March 2021, Nanos released a public opinion poll for the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, asking for thoughts on Canada's Bill C-6 ("An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy)"). [The Nanos report](#), which randomly surveyed 1016 Canadians over the age of 18, is titled: "Strong majority of Canadians agree that consenting adults should be free to get the sexuality counselling of their choice regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity." The CBC did not report on this poll at all.

The report published three key findings of relevance:

CONSENTING ADULTS ACCESSING SEXUALITY COUNSELLING OF THEIR CHOICE: Nine in ten Canadians agree (78%) or somewhat agree (13%) that consenting adults should be free to get the sexuality counselling of their choice, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and this view is consistent across regions, age, and sex.

VIEWS ON LEGALITY OF SEXUALITY COUNSELLING FOR MINORS: Canadians are divided overall on whether counselling in various scenarios related to gender identity, sexuality, and sexual behaviour for minors should be legal or illegal, with about one third of Canadians consistently expressing ambivalence.

COUNSELLING FOR MINORS WHO WISH TO CHANGE THEIR BODIES: An overwhelming majority of Canadians agree or somewhat agree there should be strict requirements for healthcare professionals to assess whether it is in young people's best interests to irreversibly alter their bodies if they don't match their gender identities. Further, most Canadians agree that counselling services with a "wait and see" approach should be available to minors thinking about changing their bodies through drug and surgical treatments.

So, Canadian opinion on these issues is unclear, and there is no consensus. Further, the Nanos report on Bill C-6 also shows that a majority of Canadians would prefer an exploratory ("wait and see") counselling approach to gender, rather than the current "affirmation-only" approach, especially in cases where medical interventions with lifelong consequences are being considered. The CBC's reporting should reflect this ambivalence regarding Canadian opinions on medical and psychological treatment for gender-questioning children and youth.

In a similar vein, in August 2021, the Macdonald Laurier Institute (MLI) released a public opinion poll entitled [Canadians' Views on Women's Sports and Gender Identity](#), which the CBC again failed to cover. The MLI report (excerpts below) found that a majority of Canadians thinks it is unfair for natal males to participate in biological women's sport.

*"By a **four-to-one** margin, Canadians believe it is 'unfair' for transgender athletes who were born male to compete in women's sport events. Sixty-two percent of Canadians believe such participation is 'unfair,' compared to just 15 percent who believe it is 'fair.'"*

The MLI report also demonstrates that there are varied opinions in Canada regarding on what basis we should segregate sports:

"Seventeen percent believe transgender athletes should be able to compete against any sex they wish to on the basis of their self-identification as a man or woman. Roughly the same number of Canadians believe transgender athletes ought to compete against other transgender athletes in a separate category. Just over 22 percent believe athletes should only be allowed to compete with athletes of the same sex that they were assigned at birth, and 25 percent prefer an 'open or mixed category' to include transgender individuals. The remainder, 18 percent, were unsure."

Again, CBC coverage should first report upon these polls and second ensure its reporting reflects the complexity and nuances of these issues.

These polls provide public opinion on just two of the issues affected by gender identity: providing and accessing ethical therapy and women's sports. It is fair to extrapolate that if Canadians as a whole are so deeply divided on these two particular issues, then they are likely also deeply divided on related subjects such as self-identification, female-only spaces like prisons, how gender is being taught in schools, pronouns/language, and more.

Obviously the CBC isn't obliged to match its output to public opinion – its job is to be impartial on contested issues. As these data show, however, opinion IS split and these issues ARE contested. To present them as settled in one particular way, and in a manner completely at odds with society, is extremely problematic – for

the CBC's special status as the nation's publicly funded broadcaster and those people most affected by the matters at hand.

We will now look at the CBC's approach and see how it compares to the public's range of opinions.

ANALYSIS

Like any mature media organisation, the CBC has swathes of guidance, rules, and protocols that both reflect AND influence the values and actions of the people who work there.

For the purposes of this report, we have focused on the following:

- 1) Mandate
- 2) Journalistic Standards and Practices

MANDATE

The mandate of the CBC is as follows:

The 1991 Broadcasting Act states that...

"...the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as the national public broadcaster, should provide radio and television services incorporating a wide range of programming that informs, enlightens and entertains;

...the programming provided by the Corporation should:

1. be predominantly and distinctively Canadian, reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions,
2. actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural expression,
3. be in English and in French, reflecting the different needs and circumstances of each official language community, including the particular needs and circumstances of English and French linguistic minorities,
4. strive to be of equivalent quality in English and French,
5. contribute to shared national consciousness and identity,
6. be made available throughout Canada by the most appropriate and efficient means and as resources become available for the purpose, and
7. reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada."

It is our view that the CBC fails on points 1, 5 and 7 in its coverage of issues related to the gender identity debate.

For instance, in January 2021, the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission board) reviewed the CBC's broadcasting licenses, which included hearings from citizens, several of whom publicly noted the CBC's imbalanced reporting on a variety of issues, including [gender](#). The CBC did not report on this commentary.

Never has CBC featured a detransitioner, [a trans person who does not subscribe to gender ideology](#), a [parent who questions the ethics](#) (or lack thereof) and evidence supporting "affirmation-only" as treatment protocol for children presenting with dysphoria or gender confusion, [teachers worried](#) about the gender ideology seeping into curricula across the country (SOGI), or [feminists who are fighting](#) to remind Canada of women's Charter protected sex-based rights, which are being eroded by Bill C-16 and self-identification.

JOURNALIST STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

This [section](#), essentially the CBC's editorial guidelines, is subdivided into 25 subsections.

The Introduction delves into the CBC's mission and principles and is worth reproducing in full (italicized text). We comment right after each relevant point in regular, non-italicized font.

We also include special commentary on the CBC's journalistic standards and practices in the category of Children and Youth.

Our Mission

We are Canada's national public news and information service. We are rooted in every region of the country and report on Canada and the world to provide a Canadian perspective on international news and current affairs.

EXAMPLE OF LACK OF BALANCE AND OMISSION: When it comes to gender, the CBC has failed to report on several international stories of great importance to the issue of gender self-identity and its impact on children. For instance, In 2020, [Finland](#) radically altered how it treats its gender-questioning minors, banning drugs and prioritizing psychotherapy. In 2021, [all six of Sweden's pediatric gender clinics](#) halted usage of puberty blockers except in clinical trials, pending a national review. That two such progressive countries have made these u-turns is massive and important international news pertaining to the most evidence-based treatment of gender-questioning youth, which affects exponentially rising numbers of Canadian children and adolescents in the last decade alone. More information on these two countries can be found below.

We provide Canadians with information when and how they want it, through an evolving range of media.

• To serve the public interest

Our mission is to inform, to reveal, to contribute to the understanding of issues of public interest and to encourage citizens to participate in our free and democratic society.

EXAMPLE OF LACK OF BALANCE AND OMISSION: Given the exploding and unprecedented numbers of children and adolescents visiting Canadian gender clinics, the CBC has shown a complete lack of curiosity and investigative reporting to understand the underlying reasons for this explosion in numbers. In what other medical context would [a 3000% increase in presenting patients](#) not warrant coverage by the CBC? If we had such an increase in a type of cancer or Covid patients in the ICU, would the CBC stay silent?

Again, the CBC is out of step with international coverage and content. For example, coverage in Sweden addressed a similar exponential growth, and their health care system as a result have taken ethical steps. After

[Swedish news organizations](#) began reporting on this phenomenon, [several prominent Swedish hospitals reevaluated how they treat gender-dysphoric youth](#) under the age of 18, banning the usage of all drugs except in clinical trials where outcomes can be monitored and patients effectively supported in an unbiased manner.

Similarly, in 2020, [Finland](#), after a comprehensive literature review, completely overhauled that country's treatment of its gender-dysphoric youth, banning all drugs and surgeries under 18 and prioritizing psychotherapeutic treatments. Such a departure from WPATH standards is massive international news that the CBC failed to report on.

The CBC on the other hand only reports on lack of access to drugs for gender-dysphoric youth ([here](#), [here](#)) or covers trans-identifying young people in [a celebratory manner](#), failing to mention [the many possible complications and side effects](#). It even [pulled a British documentary](#) that questioned the affirmative approach when several activists complained, although CBC did publish [an opinion piece](#) written by sexologist Dr. Debra Soh critical of that decision.

During the summer of 2021, on its home page the CBC in fact featured several celebratory-only trans pieces, including one on [sports](#) and another on a [child](#) medically transitioning.

- **To reflect diversity**

We are committed to reflecting accurately the range of experiences and points of view of all citizens. All Canadians, of whatever origins, perspectives and beliefs, should feel that our news and current affairs coverage is relevant to them and lives up to our principles.

We have a special responsibility to reflect regional and cultural diversity, as well as fostering respect and understanding across regions.

EXAMPLE OF LACK OF BALANCE AND OMISSION: CBC repeatedly fails to interview individuals or organisations who with good reason disagree with the “affirmative-only” approach for treatment of gender-questioning children. The concerns for affirmation-first are due to the lack of evidence to support such treatment. Concerned individuals include parents and teachers as well as medical and mental health experts. The CBC continues to access activists, not experts, and/or only experts whose views align with the CBC's apparent bias. In contrast, the *National Post* in December 2020 published a quite balanced article that took in many viewpoints on the issue: [Canada's teen transgender treatment boom: Life-saving services or dangerous experimentation?](#)

CBC's continual and repeated omission also includes those who are concerned about the effects of individuals who self-identify as a different gender competing in elite women's sports. For every article the CBC published about [Laurel Hubbard](#), it failed to mention the biological woman from New Zealand kept entirely out of the Olympics or explore why people may be concerned about the changes being imposed on women's sports in order to accommodate self-identifying males. Only a few pieces such as [this article](#) even touch on why people might be upset, interestingly mentioned by a Canadian transgender referee being interviewed. This other [article](#) does include the opinion of expert Linda Blade, but only as a sort of footnote to a piece almost entirely dedicated to unquestioningly promoting the integration of transgender athletes.

The CBC has also completely failed to report on [protests outside Canadian women's prisons](#) by feminist groups concerned about violence to biological females by males who self-identify as women. This concern is not fabricated. There are instances of rapes and pregnancies as more biological men who identify as women start

being housed with biological women, as reported in major publications such as the [Wall Street Journal](#), the [Guardian](#), the [National Post](#), and [Quillette](#).

• ***To protect our independence***

We are independent of all lobbies and of all political and economic influence. We uphold freedom of expression and freedom of the press, the touchstones of a free and democratic society. Public interest guides all our decisions.

EXAMPLE OF LACK OF BALANCE AND OMISSION: CBC's decision in 2017 not to air the aforementioned [transgender teen documentary](#) due to some complaints is difficult to believe. To cave to activist demand is the farthest position from freedom of expression and the press. Moreover, all during the summer of 2021, CBC heavily promoted a [documentary](#) that chronicled the transition of a child. The CBC has only promoted medical transition options for gender-questioning youth, rather than explore whether offering off-label drugs such as puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones based on young people's self-declared gender goals has any evidence of being in those children's long-term best interests. That the CBC would engage in promotion of an unproven and poorly understood medical treatment model for gender-questioning youth without recognizing the ongoing international debate about this treatment model is unethical.

Is it the CBC's unwritten mandate to advertise and promote pharmaceuticals to gender-questioning youth and their families as a solution to a young person's experience of gender dysphoria? In a [letter](#) published in November 2020, former CBC employees expressed concern about CBC's ability to separate advertising from news as well as to be transparent. This is extremely concerning since this may be reflective of a wider problem within the organization.

Two articles by independent journalists recently published in the [Spectator](#) and on [Substack](#) point out that the problem of reporting imbalance when it comes to the treatment of gender-questioning young people is pervasive in the left-wing media. So perhaps it should come as no surprise that the CBC is following. However, the difference is that the CBC is a publicly funded agency, therefore it has a duty to be balanced, particularly with controversial subjects, rather than presenting one side as a foregone conclusion, for the benefit of all Canadians.

• ***To act responsibly and to be accountable***

We are aware of the impact of our work and are honest with our audiences. We do not hesitate to correct any mistake when necessary nor to follow up a story when a situation changes significantly. We do not plagiarize.

The office of the Ombudsman reviews our practices against the standards set out in these policies. We openly provide the public with the means to judge and hold us to account by sharing with it research we may use to measure the quality and standards of our journalism.

POSITIVE EXAMPLE: The CBC Ombudsman is very responsive to complaints and routinely forwards questions submitted by readers about articles to the editors and journalists. However, of the many dozens of complaints about imbalance and omission in CBC's coverage in terms of gender identity issues of which we are aware, not once has a public correction been made, despite copious amounts of evidence being sent from reputable sources and experts.

The only correction that was made related to gender that is publicly listed on the CBC's site was an admission of imbalance in coverage of [JK Rowling on the CBC Kids website](#), published on October 29, 2020, at least four months after the original article came out.

Ombudsman Jack Nagler had this to say: *“So the heart of the problem in this program was not the series of viewpoints that were heard, it was the viewpoints that were NOT heard. The segment was not balanced, and it contributed to an impression among complainants that CBC was promoting a particular point of view. This was a violation of policy, and I am glad to see that Ms. Fender acknowledged this.*

I understand your contention that it is difficult to undo the damage when a media organization makes an error. After all, there is no way to ensure that everyone who saw the mistake will see the correction. However, the measures described above strike me as an appropriate and good-faith effort by CBC. The follow-up program helped inject some of the “balance over time” required by the JSP. The online article was made more fair and more comprehensive, and Kids News offered transparency to the audience with both a clarification note on the page, and with the wording of the follow-up program. Looking forward, there is a recognition that the team needs to do more to preserve the rigour of its system.

The real test will of course be what happens next at CBC Kids News, as intentions can only take you so far. The responsibility to get it right belongs to the (adult) producers, whose job it is to ensure that this particular lesson won't need to be repeated. The guidelines set out by the JSP are important in every aspect of CBC journalism. They are all the more important for information aimed at children, tweens and teens.”

It is unclear whether CBC Kids has taken the Ombudsman's recommendations to heart in the aftermath. It would be advisable for the rest of the organization to heed and follow the Ombudsman's advice.

We manage our resources responsibly. We strive for journalistic excellence and best practices in all of our journalistic endeavours.

Our Principles

- **Accuracy**

We seek out the truth in all matters of public interest. We invest our time and our skills to learn, understand and clearly explain the facts to our audience. The production techniques we use serve to present the content in a clear and accessible manner.

EXAMPLE OF LACK OF BALANCE AND OMISSION: When it comes to the issue of gender identity medicalization, accuracy falls by the wayside, in particular how to treat gender-questioning youth, for which there are very few good studies. The affirmation treatment model which relies on medicalization as the only appropriate course of treatment to resolve feelings of gender dysphoria in young people is poorly understood. Evidence that activists use to claim support for medicalization is being applied to a different cohort because the few studies were conducted on childhood-onset gender dysphoria and are likely not applicable to adolescent-onset gender dysphoria. Of particular note, very few good, reliable studies have been conducted at all about detransitioners, so there is very little information about them - one way or the other. Ideal studies would have controls, be conducted over long periods of time (ideally 8-10+ years), with a small enough loss to follow up, unflawed study instruments, unflawed analysis, and cohorts relevant to the patients seeking care. Unfortunately, much

of the available evidence is low quality and unreliable, frequently with huge losses to follow up, thereby introducing massive uncertainties.

These are complicated issues, no doubt, and optimally require the attention of a dedicated health and science reporter with the expertise to read and correctly interpret reports like this one on [puberty blockers](#) and this on [cross-sex hormones](#), both of which were conducted by the UK's [National Institute of Health and Care Excellence](#) (NICE found the evidence “very low” for both).

Moreover, independent journalist Jesse Singhal in June 2021 wrote a scathing article in the Spectator World called [What the Media Gets Wrong on Gender Reassignment](#): The media is guilty of gross negligence on gender reassignment reporting. Singhal is discussing the media generally, but he could well be describing the CBC in particular.

- **Fairness**

In our information gathering and reporting, we treat individuals and organizations with openness and respect. We are mindful of their rights. We treat them even-handedly.

EXAMPLE OF IMBALANCE: CBC absolutely treats transgender individuals with respect, and that is laudatory. However, they do not treat those who disagree with legislative and policy changes that equate gender identity with biological sex with similar respect. In fact, they almost always ignore them. These include [feminists protesting biological men in women's prisons](#), activist [“Billboard Chris” being violently assaulted](#) in Montreal in March 2021, and failure to report on [detransitioners](#), to name but a few.

- **Balance**

We contribute to informed debate on issues that matter to Canadians by reflecting a diversity of opinion. Our content on all platforms presents a wide range of subject matter and views.

On issues of controversy, we ensure that divergent views are reflected respectfully, taking into account their relevance to the debate and how widely held these views are. We also ensure that they are represented over a reasonable period of time.

EXAMPLE OF IMBALANCE: Examples abound of lack of fairness in CBC's reporting on gender controversies. For instance, in this June 2021 [article](#) about Abigail Shrier's controversial book *Irreversible Damage*, the CBC focused on why people wanted it removed from the library, but not why other people might want to read it nor why there is a long waiting list for it. Moreover, when at the end of July the Canadian Federation of Library Associations released [an important statement](#) as to why they would be recommending their member libraries keep the Shrier book and other controversial works on their shelves, the CBC did not issue a follow up story that is arguably of even more impact to Canadians nationwide since the CFLA vigorously defended Canadian's Charter rights and upheld the need to access balanced and alternative viewpoints on complex issues.

In terms of podcasts, the CBC has at least two dedicated to transgender issues: Chosen Family and The Village. But there are no podcasts at all like [Gender: A Wider Lens](#) that sensitively and compassionately discuss gender issues with more viewpoint diversity and through a more exploratory model.

- **Impartiality**

We provide professional judgment based on facts and expertise. We do not promote any particular point of view on matters of public debate.

EXAMPLES OF IMBALANCE: Most articles about gender do in fact seem to promote a particular view. For instance, this [article](#) about Arkansas' SAFE bill takes as fact that it is a Republican plot and example of bigotry, failing to recognize that other people from the [centre](#) and [left](#) and even [adult trans people](#) themselves are also alarmed at how quickly young people are being given drugs and surgeries for questioning their gender.

CBC opinion articles about gender identity are overwhelmingly positive and celebratory (examples [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)) or discuss potential bigotry. Never has CBC featured a [detransitioner](#), a [trans person who does not adhere to gender ideology](#), a [parent](#) who questions the automatic "affirmation-only" protocol being promoted despite a very low evidence base, or [teachers worried](#) about the gender ideology seeping into curricula across the country (SOGI). The last time Dr. Debra Soh was published by the CBC was 2017.

This [recent article](#) from August 2021 provides quite one-sided advice on talking to kids about gender and sexuality: It interviews a transgender activist and a person who works for a sexual health group and has no children and highlights CBC Kids' own video primer on Gender – explained (more analysis on this further down the report). It does not interview other types of parents, such as gay dads or lesbian mothers, feminists, educators, or other experts and presents only one viewpoint on how and what to talk about gender and sexuality with kids.

It is unclear if CBC has gone so far as the [BBC](#) in having a politically motivated LGBT/Pride consultant or board made up of employees weighing in on editorial issues, although according to this [article](#) it seems likely. If so, this position should be dismissed or disbanded to ensure impartiality and eliminate any conflict of interest. An alternative would be to counterbalance such a position by adding experts well-versed in science and the legal ramifications of biological sex as well as those with academic accreditation and a history of peer-reviewed publications.

- **Integrity**

The trust of the public is our most valued asset. We avoid putting ourselves in real or potential conflict of interest. This is essential to our credibility.

EXAMPLE: One need only to look at the comments in many CBC articles - often unrelated entirely to gender - to see that the CBC's credibility is already eroding.

At the same time, CBC has disabled comments on most (or all) articles related to gender. Recently, the [editor](#) cited "toxic comments" (interestingly that piece, for which comments are enabled, has more than 8000 comments). That may be the case, but it also could be the case that many of the commentators don't agree with the premises and assumptions of the article, and CBC perhaps wishes to silence them. Either way, disabling comments does nothing to "encourage citizens to participate in our free and democratic society."

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The CBC includes interesting language on its section on its journalistic standards and practices when it comes to children and youth. This is a particularly important section to review since children are impressionable and looking for both education and entertainment.

The participation of children (15 and younger) and youth (16 or 17) in our programs and content entails special challenges. Children and youth do not necessarily have the experience to weigh the consequences of publication of their statements. They nevertheless enjoy freedom of expression and the right to information.

The CBC here is explaining its policies on interviewing children and youth. But it is interesting to note that “children and youth do not necessarily have the experience to weigh the consequences of publication of their statements.” This could also be extrapolated to say that children and youth also do not have the experience to figure out what may be true and what may be biased information in what they read and which may cause them to take actions that may have lifelong unintended consequences.

Thus, we posit that it is imperative CBC produces content geared toward children that is appropriate, balanced and with as little bias as possible.

EXAMPLES OF IMBALANCE: In 2019, the CBC produced this video entitled “[Gender – explained](#)”:

This appealing cartoon directed squarely at children under the age of 10 is an example of influencing kids into thinking that gender is a replacement for sex because gender is “who you are” and sex is just your body parts. The cartoon begins by introducing the concept of sex as something being determined by one’s genitals and then moves into gender stereotypes. At the end is the declaration by a child that “gender is who you are,” which is an ideological statement of belief because no one can prove that everyone has some kind of innate “gender.” Yet the cartoon posits this as established scientific fact when it is not.

This is manipulative for children because it suggests that an important part of themselves (their gender identity - the truth of “who they are”) may not be aligned with their bodies. While the messaging anchors gender with stereotypes like clothing or toy choices, the implication for children and adolescents to declare a different gender identity in our society is that this is a permanent identity, when psychological research shows that childhood and adolescence are times of great identity changes and developments.

Another piece directed at children and presented with only one viewpoint is an article entitled She/Her, He/Him and They/Them. What are pronouns? It also contains another cartoonish video aimed at young children: <https://www.cbc.ca/kidsnews/post/she-her-he-him-and-they-them.-what-are-pronouns/>

The article uses ideological terms such as “sex assigned at birth.” Sex is not assigned at birth, as if doctors are randomly deciding who will be a girl and who a boy; it is observed at birth. The article also states that children as young as 2 or 3 may want to change their pronouns. This is a misunderstanding of young children and the imaginary worlds they inhabit at that age as part of their normal development. They also may want to be a dolphin or a superhero – and even may actually think they are for a time.

The article cites “staff at the children’s hospital in Toronto” (with no specific name) as saying: “Exploring one’s identity is an important and normal part of adolescence. For some teens, this may include considering which pronouns feel most comfortable to them, and there is no evidence that doing so causes harm.”

However, it is not true that there no evidence that doing so causes harm. Evidence *does* exist that social transition like pronoun changes may cause harm for youth. For instance, in the journal *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Dr. Thomas Steensma et al published a paper in 2010 ("Desisting and persisting gender dysphoria after childhood: A qualitative follow-up study"). These authors argue that social transition makes it harder to revert to one's birth sex. We can draw a reasonable hypothesis from their work that if certain, natural developmental milestones are disrupted in adolescence, then unnatural persistence may occur, leading to lifelong medicalization. Interrupting these milestones in youth, including gender identity and sexuality exploration, may be harmful not just to individuals but to society as a whole. The October 2020 publication of "Not social transition status, but peer relations and family functioning predict psychological functioning in a German clinical sample of children with gender dysphoria" by Sievert et al. found that "claims that gender affirmation through transitioning socially is beneficial for children with GD could not be supported from the present results. Instead, the study highlights the importance of individual social support provided by peers and family, independent of exploring additional possibilities of gender transition during counseling."

Moreover, there is growing anecdotal evidence that some gender-questioning people find always having to state pronouns emotionally distressing. It can be embarrassing to transsexuals who "pass" and are just looking to move through life undisturbed, and it can be hurtful to detransitioners who wish to return to living as their biological sex despite irreversible changes to their bodies. It can also be stressful to those who have not yet decided or are unsure about their pronouns to be constantly thinking about and forced to reveal them.

Both pieces also misunderstood what intersex is, using the condition implicitly as proof that sex is on a spectrum. Intersex conditions (Disorders of Sex Development) are sex specific. Sexual differentiation in fetuses is a binary, mutually exclusive process, and so it is impossible for any person to have fully functioning sexual organs of both sexes simultaneously. Intersex means that some men and some women have sexual organs or chromosomes which are atypical but are still men or women, not a third sex. Many intersex people take exception to being thought of as a third sex or proof of a sex spectrum and do not wish for their unique biological conditions being used in the transgender political debates. Intersex and transgender are not the same thing.

The picture overall

It is obvious that while there are some professional and impartial aspects to the CBC's policies, significant elements have departed from the mission to inform, educate, and entertain, and moved into the realm of advocacy, partiality, and imparting a particular viewpoint. One might very well interpret the CBC's stance on gender identity issues as indoctrination. Of particular concern is the potential harmful and manipulative impact that CBC's biased content is having on children and adolescents as they go through various phases of identity exploration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The CBC has wide and deep expertise, particularly in its news and current affairs output. As such, we are confident that it can address the weaknesses that exist and ensure it applies its existing Mandate and Journalistic Standards and Practices.

With this in mind, we offer the following six recommendations:

1. CBC leadership must commission an independent review of the broadcaster's approach to gender self-identity issues and coverage – policies and language usage in particular – to assess the legality, impartiality, and balance of these topics against its obligations to Canadians as a taxpayer-funded organization.
2. CBC leadership must issue a clear statement as to how it intends to fulfill its obligation to impartiality and balance in coverage on the contested issues.
3. Guidance for producers, editors, and reporters must be issued to support them in ensuring output that is balanced, impartial, and informative. When needed, health education should be provided (e.g., how to correctly read and interpret medical studies).
4. Historical material must be reviewed for accuracy, balance, and impartiality and, where it fails to meet the standards of impartiality and balance required, must be addressed – through re-editing, or where this is not possible, withdrawal from circulation, with accessible public notifications of the same.
5. For full transparency, the CBC must make public the names and expertise of every person it has used and uses as an advisory referent.
6. If the CBC has a politically motivated LGBT/Pride consultant or board weighing in on editorial issues, then this position or board must be dismissed or disbanded to ensure impartiality and remove conflict of interest. An alternative would be to counterbalance such a position by adding experts who are well-versed in the science and legal ramifications of biological sex as well as those with academic accreditation and a history of peer-reviewed publications.