

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

CENSUS (AMENDMENT) (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM PROFESSOR SURYA MONRO, PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP, CONFLICT, IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

I am writing to voice my deep concern about the hijacking of critical approaches to gender by a small group of academics and others who claim to represent the views and interests of women, and its deployment to attempt to reduce the rights that trans women have been granted by Scottish Parliament.

I speak specifically about submissions calling for the guidance used in the 2011 census to be dropped. This guidance allows trans people to self identify, in line with basic human rights concerning identity and self determination.

As a cisgender academic who has been working in the field of trans studies since 1994 and who published early seminal work on trans, I would strongly support the Scottish government in recognising that the views of these cisgender activists are rooted in bigotry, essentialist views of sex and gender, and a desire to actively erode diversity and equality.

It would be very problematic if trans people are forced to identify as a sex they do not feel they belong to in official data collecting exercises, as it would lead to a lack of scientific rigour.

I trust that the Scottish Government's commitment to recognising prejudice for what it is will continue, even when this prejudice is wrapped up in a cloak of supposed expertise and academic language and/or assertions of being feminist.