

Two Foundational Tenets for an Alberta Parents' Bill of Rights

Thank You NB, ON, SK, and Kudos to AB

The above provincial governments, and parental rights advocates across Canada, deserve our deep appreciation. Finally, commitments (i.e. legislation – NB, ON, SK, and policy proposals - AB) are happening on behalf of parents' rights, their children's developmental health, and the autonomy of families from unwarranted State intervention.

Outline Content and Argument

This paper addresses three closely associated policy proposals approved at UCP AGM 2023: (paraphrased)

- Proposal 8 – parental control of name change and pronoun usage in schools for children under age 16;
- Proposal 17 – creation of a comprehensive Parents' Bill of Rights; and
- Proposal 20 – banning from schools all teaching materials, media, books, and activities that are either of a sexual, racist, or abusive content or not part of the Alberta Program of Studies.

Each proposal will be discussed in priority from the author's viewpoint of positive impact. The argument will be made that priority should be placed on turning Proposals 17 and 20 into meaningful legislation, including new restrictions on GSA club and GSA Network dynamics. If Proposals 17 and 20 are comprehensively articulated and enforced there will be no need for turning Proposal 8 into law. Indeed, as will be shown, to focus on "name change and pronoun usage" as a vehicle for assuring parents have a voice in the sexual and gender development of their children is a flawed strategy.

For us (Alberta), to become ensnared in a court battle over Policy Proposal 8 should be avoided. If the "notwithstanding clause" is to be declared to bring about timely rational and just remedy to the province, may it be declared over a comprehensive Alberta Parents' Bill of Rights which includes (Proposal 20), and not peripheral "name change and pronoun usage" policy.

UCP AGM Policy Proposal 17 – Priority Governance

Policy Proposal 17 reads: *"Support a comprehensive Bill of Parental Rights which ensures that all legislation will recognize and support parents' rights to be informed of and in-charge of all decisions to do with all services paid for by the province, including education and health care."* This declaration echoes actual legislation passed in Saskatchewan. Premier Moe's "[Parents' Bill of Rights](#)" was announced as an inclusionary policy that ensures parents are at the forefront of every important decision in their child's life. The Bill gives parents assurance and confidence that they will be involved in key decisions their children face no matter the school they attend.

In Alberta, a similar remedy is needed to correct unprecedented loss of parental influence and oversight in the gender and sexual development of our children. This unprecedented and experimental shift in "parent-child-State" relationships resulted from passage of the so-called "LGBTQ Students' Rights Law" or "Gay-Straight Alliance Law" (Bill 10) in 2015. The Law has been enforced without significant change spanning Prentice, Notley, Kenney, and now Smith governments. Most parents reject the legislative premise that students, regardless of age, maturity, psychological/medical history, and family values, should be empowered by the State to full independence and secrecy from parents, regarding the SOGI "self-identity" they give at school, and who they associate with through the GSA club/network.

Proponents of GSA Law advocated GSAs were mere social clubs requiring no more adult oversight than for school chess clubs. As a result, GSAs are unsupervised, peer-led clubs that require no constitution, no public notice of

activities, and no transparency of membership. Children, starting from age five (kindergarten), can create or join a club without parental knowledge or approval. The clubs are coordinated within a GSA Network operated by adults and associated with activist agencies not accountable to either government or parents.

GSA and SOGI governance have disenfranchised parental rights and powers established in other legislation:

- Alberta Family Law Act states parents are empowered to make decisions about the child's education, extracurricular activities, cultural and religious upbringing, with whom the child is to associate, and all health-related treatments.
- Alberta Education Act, s. 58.1, Notice to Parent, requires parents to be informed by teachers when matters of human sexuality are going to be taught and empowers parents to opt their children out of the teaching.

The conflict between GSA/SOGI rights for children and well-established parenting rights is clear. As a result, most of Alberta's 766,000 students, those ages 5 to 15 and the psychologically or cognitively vulnerable, are at risk. For example, gender clinic referrals in Canada are skyrocketing and 75% of these are biological girls identifying trans male. Dr. Lisa Littman, specialist in gender dysphoria at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, reports on a phenomenon she titles "[Rapid Onset of Gender Dysphoria \(GD\) in Adolescents and Young Adults \(AYAs\)](#)." The development occurs in the context of being part of a peer group where one, multiple, or even all friends have developed gender dysphoria and come out as transgender during the same timeframe. She comments on why this is happening: "*The worsening of mental well-being and parent-child relationship, peer group dynamics [GSA clubs], and behaviors that isolate teens from their parents, families, non-transgender friends and mainstream sources of information are particularly concerning [bold text is my insert].*" Moreover, in a 2020 decision, a British High Court ruled that children 15 or younger could not understand and properly weigh the long-term risks and consequences of taking puberty blockers.

Premier Smith will inevitably have to clarify whose rights prevail and under what circumstances, the child's age, psychological and cognitive maturity being major factors for consideration. Litigation in the courts is unavoidable. Thus, Alberta needs a comprehensive Parents' Bill of Rights that can be well defended in court and justifiably enforced by the "notwithstanding clause" if necessary.

UCP AGM Policy Proposal 20 – Priority Governance to Also Include GSA Club/Network Activities

Proposal 20 reads "*Ensure that teachers, schools, school boards, and third parties providing services to kindergarten to Grade 12 schools do not provide access to materials of a sexual, racist, or abusive nature, including, but not limited to, books, handouts, online materials, and live events that are not part of the Alberta Program of Studies.*" This policy is pivotal to mitigating parental fears that ideology and non-curriculum subject matter have proliferated in Alberta schools. GSA club, GSA Network, and associated activist agency activities should not be exempt from this policy. The adult-run Alberta GSA Network must come under Alberta government oversight and accountability. Sound controls by *Alberta Education* on GSA club and GSA network activities must be embedded in the Parents' Bill of Rights.

UCP AGM Policy Proposal 8 – Ineffective and Unnecessary

Proposal 8 reads: "*Require Teachers, Schools, and School Boards to obtain the written consent of the parent/guardian of a student under the age of 16 prior to changing the name and/or pronouns used by the student.*" Note that children may identify as transgender, pansexual, transexual, genderqueer, intersex, bigender, gender fluid, polygender, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, queer etc. without changing their name. Moreover, if a name change is requested, it is far too late in the child's development to be the "**oh by the way**" trigger to notify the parents. Proposal 8 rationale reads in part: "*Schools should not be in the business of going behind parents'*

backs.” Should the proposal become law, it will remain legal for schools to continue to go “*behind parent’s backs,*” given the child does not ask for a name change or new pronoun usage. Secret GSA membership and secret SOGI self-identity while at school, starting in kindergarten, remain unchanged. Alberta’s parenting issues and children’s health concerns are much more profound and will be only modestly impacted by implementing Proposal 8. **Indeed, failure to win a court challenge over the “name change and pronoun usage” policy could put effective implementation of Proposals 17 and 20 at risk.** To make Proposal 8 a key feature of remedial legislation accomplishes little. As a strategy, it’s analogous to:

- hunters targeting the duck decoys with all the weaponry possible while the real birds (“issues”) remain untouched, indeed overlooked in all the noise; or
- offering Tylenol for the governance ails when major surgery is what’s really needed.

Two Essential Tenets in an Alberta Parents’ Bill of Rights

Parents want their Alberta Family Law Act rights and powers re-affirmed and protected in law. They want oversight and consent authority until their children have adequate maturity to make sound life changing decisions, including consent authority over the adults their children may associate with.

Two crucial remedies (declarations) that must be part of an Alberta Parents’ Bill of Rights are:

- Parents, regardless of how their children identify at school, have the right to know who is influencing their children’s sexual and gender development, where and when this is happening, and what their children are being told at school and in the GSA club/network.
- Students under age 16 must obtain parental consent before they become a member of a GSA club or provide a sexual orientation or gender identity to their school.

Carman Bradley

Founder Parental Consent Alberta

www.parentalconsentalberta.ca

