[Insert Name]

[Insert Address]

[Insert Address]

[Insert Address]

[Insert date]

Mr. Roderic O’Gorman TD
Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Dear Minister O’Gorman,

I am concerned that any amendment to our Equality legislation to include “gender identity” will result in the elimination of female-only spaces and the erosion of safeguarding.

I am opposed to the inclusion of “gender identity” as one of the protected grounds in our Equal Status Act, where it would displace or supplant the primacy of biological sex as one of the protected grounds and interfere with the provision of single sex spaces; services and sports; and opportunities for women to increase participation/representation in public life.

The current exemptions based on gender operate to address inequalities faced by women and girls: securing single-sex spaces and services, ensuring fair competition in sport, and ring-fencing opportunities by way of positive action.

Any amendment that seeks to replace biological sex with “gender identity” as a ground in the Equal Status Act could potentially lead to the elimination of these exemptions to the detriment of women and girls.

Legal opinion sought by The Countess on this matter highlights the very real risk that expansion of the gender ground will be used to support arguments that men can simply self-identify into female-only spaces, sports categories, vocational opportunities supposedly ring-fenced for women and that those arguments will succeed. This is already happening in other countries. In California a male sex offender Darren Mereger identified as a woman to access a female-only space where he exposed himself to women and girls; in Loudoun County School, a teenager wearing a skirt entered the girls’ toilets and raped a teenage girl.

It must be made clear that protection from discrimination on grounds of gender identity **does not** entail an entitlement for trans identifying males to enter female only single-sex spaces, services, sports, or opportunities.

Furthermore, any statutory provision that did so would be out of step with what the public want, as evidenced by the Countess Red C poll which showed the public want spaces and services separated by biological sex, not gender identity. Single sex provision is necessary for women and girls to participate fully in society as equals. Single sex spaces are the cornerstone of safeguarding.

Under EU law a trans-identified person who experiences discrimination arising from their gender reassignment, or transition, is already protected under the gender ground, therefore the addition of gender identity ground to our equality legislation is unnecessary.

Adding “gender identity” as a ground to the Equality legislation is a well-intentioned attempt to be inclusive but risks enabling predators who will exploit weakened safeguards to access victims. As the Government has not undertaken an impact assessment on this very important legislative measure, and for all the reasons I have outlined, I cannot support it.

With kind regards,
le meas,

[Insert Name]