**SPEECH FOR OUR DUTY PROTEST – 5/6/2023 San Diego**

I represent here today a small national multi-issue radical feminist organization solidly on the Left called Feminists in Struggle. I, myself, am a lesbian, a feminist, a socialist, a Green, a civil rights lawyer, and a life-long activist. I am proud to join with all of you today, parents, de-transitioners, others from the gay community, heterosexuals, people with a range of political views, to proclaim in one voice that no child is born in the wrong body! This atrocity of sterilizing and mutilating children and teens who are gender non-conforming, gay, autistic, traumatized, or otherwise different, in the name of what is euphemistically called “gender affirming care”, must end.

Frankly, gender identity ideology including child “transition” has nothing to do with the progressive values of equality and social justice that I cut my teeth on, nor with the decades of struggle I participated in as both a leader and activist for lesbian and gay rights. It also has nothing to do with my feminism that sought to eliminate sexism, not sex itself.

There is nothing wrong with these children’s bodies - or the bodies of gender non-conforming adults for that matter - that needs to be “fixed” by experimental so-called treatments like puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and cosmetic surgeries – the removal or mutilation of healthy body parts. Feminine boys, and masculine girls, and same sex attracted teens are fine just as they are. Bodies & roles do not need to “match.” Allow these children to grow and develop with their bodies intact. And tell the truth to young adults that these “treatments” cause serious permanent harms and do not cure gender unhappiness or anything else.

Children of both sexes need to be freed not from their bodies, but from gender roles and stereotypes that put them into boxes based on their sex, preventing them from freely exploring their interests and expressing their personalities.

Young same sex attracted people need to be freed, not from their healthy sexed bodies, but from homophobia. They need to be freed from the idea that same sex feelings and relationships are abnormal and shameful and that it is far better to pass as a straight person of the other sex, to be turned into a life-long medical patient and a eunuch, sterilized, and denied the ability to experience sexual pleasure, then to grow up to be lesbian or gay.

Girls need to be freed from sexism that demeans them and their developing bodies as sex objects, that subjects them to male sexual and physical violence, and still, even today, places obstacles in their path to following their dreams because of their sex. We shouldn’t be surprised that it is mostly girls going through adolescence and young women just entering adulthood that want to escape their sexed bodies, that have bought the lie of gender transition, that sex doesn’t exist or that it is possible to change sex.

When I was a girl growing up in the 50’s and 60’s, I too wanted to be a boy. I wanted the power, privilege, respect, and opportunity that only men had. The final straw was when I was told in 8th grade that girls could not be forest rangers but could only marry one. So, I began to look for a way out. When I read in a magazine about Christine Jorgenson who had undergone “sex change,” I thought I had found the solution. Instead, I had an opportunity to grow up, unscathed, and found feminism, a career I loved, and later came out as a lesbian. I have been with my partner for 33 years. If I was growing up now, the story could have been quite different, quite tragic.

For all the spirited girls out there, for all the misfits like I was, for all the tomboys, for all the future pioneers, scientists, athletes, doctors, lawyers, thinkers, writers, artists, carpenters, mechanics, engineers, leaders who were born female, for the lesbians, for all the future feminists and visionaries, for all the amazing mothers of past, present and future generations, for the memory of my own rebellious and loving tomboy mother who as a child used to run across rooftops tearing her dresses, FOR ALL OF THEM, let’s put an end to this atrocity. STOP CHILD TRANSITION! NO ONE IS BORN IN THE WRONG BODY!

Ann Menasche