

Sweden: Sex Change for Children

by **Ingrid Carlqvist**

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Translation of the original text: **Sverige: Regeringen vill låta barn byta kön**

Translated by *Maria Celanders*

Translations of this item:

▪ **Spanish**

- Young Swedes are not allowed to vote until they are 18, and they cannot buy alcohol until they are 20, but plans are now being made to allow children as young as 12 years old to apply to have their legal gender changed.
- Yes, the report actually says, "No one should have to go through any kind of medical or psychological treatment..." Nowhere in the report was there any mention of the suicide risk or any other negative aspects of mutilating healthy adolescents. The purpose of the investigation seems to be to pave the way for new legislation, not on the best interests of the children.
- Activists are allowed to use the classrooms to propagandize *against* so-called heteronormativity and to *promote* all kinds of sexual expressions -- *except* heterosexuality. One cannot but wonder if this school campaign has led to a record number of kids seeking treatment for gender dysphoria.
- "When children who reported transgender feelings were tracked without medical or surgical treatment at both Vanderbilt University and London's Portman Clinic, 70%-80% of them spontaneously lost those feelings." — Paul R. McHugh, Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Although Swedes are shocked that many immigrant girls are subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM), the Swedish government plans to allow hospitals to cut away the perfectly healthy genitals of children who believe they belong to the opposite sex. In 2011, a **Swedish study** done by Karolinska Institutet showed that

the suicide rate among post-op transgender people is far higher than that of the general population. Other **studies** show that 70%-80% of kids suffering from gender dysphoria lose these feelings after a few years.

In 2014, it was **revealed** that about 60 girls in Norrköping had been subjected to FGM. In a class of newly arrived Somali refugees, all 30 girls had been mutilated, 28 of them through the most brutal kind of FGM, infibulation: cutting off the clitoris and the labia, then sewing together the edges of the vulva to prevent sexual intercourse. School Health Services discovered the abuse by asking the girls questions -- a measure initiated by the government and led by individuals who evidently want to eliminate FGM. There is good reason to **suspect** that Somali girls -- and other girls born in Sweden -- are being genitally mutilated during trips to their parents' homelands.

Yet despite loud protests against this cruel and un-Swedish practice, the government seems to be planning to legislate in favor of another kind of genital mutilation of children: Sex-change operations, or to use a more politically correct term "gender reassignment surgery" (GRS). [1]

Young Swedes are not allowed to vote until they are 18, and they cannot buy alcohol until they are 20, but plans are now being made to allow children as young as 12 years old to apply to change their legal gender. This would allow children to be identified on all legal documents, ID cards and passports as belonging to a gender different from the one they were born with. In addition, according to an official report commissioned by the Swedish government, "**Legal sex and medical sex change**," authored by the Committee on the Age Limit for Approval of a Change of Gender, the process of obtaining permission to have a legal gender change and/or sex-change operation should be swift.

The report states:

"The process of changing your legal gender should be swift, simple and transparent. Further, it is important that the laws regulating the legal change do not make any direct or indirect demands that the person is treated medically in order to receive a legal gender change. No one should have to go through any kind of medical or psychological treatment, process or test related to gender identity."

Yes, the report actually says, "No one should have to go through any kind of medical or psychological treatment..." -- as if it is a bad thing to make sure it is not

harmful for children to tamper with their gender identity or have their genitals removed. If this planned legislation passes, it would mean that if a child has the consent of his or her parents, no examination of the child will be required in order to receive the new identification papers.

To allow healthcare professionals to evaluate if the child does, in fact, have the "wrong" gender -- or is suffering from a mental disorder, or has been influenced by "trendy" parents -- is labeled, in the report, "coercion." Under existing legislation, the report laments, in order to change one's gender identity, "the individual is forced to contact healthcare services."

The report completely ignores the conclusions of the 2011 Karolinska Institutet [study](#), which stated:

"Persons with transsexualism, after sex reassignment, have considerably higher risks for mortality, suicidal behaviour, and psychiatric morbidity than the general population. Our findings suggest that sex reassignment, although alleviating gender dysphoria, may not suffice as treatment for transsexualism, and should inspire improved psychiatric and somatic care after sex reassignment for this patient group."

In Sweden, improving psychiatric care is apparently not an option. On the contrary - the report refers to an [article](#) published 15 years ago in *Läkartidningen*, the official magazine of the Swedish Medical Association, which states:

"A person with gender dysphoria is said to suffer from a disrupted gender identity. It is not possible to change a person's gender identity. Rather, the only solution available is to make the person's body resemble the perceived sex as much as possible, which entails hormonal and surgical gender correction. Gender reassignment is, at present, the best help available for transsexuals and persons with gender dysphoria."

However, what the Committee ignored is that the *Läkartidningen* article *also* clearly states that a comprehensive investigation must be conducted *before* someone is allowed a sex change. An electroencephalogram (EEG), a [sex chromatin](#) determination and a brain scan of the pituitary area are all recommended. The *Läkartidningen* article further warns that some people who perceive themselves as belonging to the opposite sex may be schizophrenics suffering from delusions -- a condition that should be treated with antipsychotic medication.



The current report by the Committee, on the other hand, focuses completely, in every way, on accommodating people who perceive themselves as having "the wrong sex." Considering the government's apparent view of the issue, maybe that view is not so strange. Erik Ullenhag, who was then minister responsible for LGBT-issues, **stated** on January 1, 2014 to the daily *Svenska Dagbladet*:

"I can see that we need to change the age-limit on legal gender change. To a 15- or 16-year-old, one year can be a very long time relative to how you are feeling. But there are conflicts we need to sort out, such as what happens if a 16-year-old has one opinion and the parents another."

The Committee and its report that followed was part of the "LGBT strategy" by the government of that time, and was the first Committee of its kind. The belief that such a strategy was needed, was the result of many years of intensive lobbying by the gay-rights organization, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL).

A year later, in January 2015, the Committee concluded its report and handed it over to the new Minister for Health and Social Affairs, Gabriel Wikström. Nowhere in the report is there any mention of the suicide risk or any other negative aspects of mutilating healthy adolescents. The purpose of the Committee seems to have been to pave the way for new legislation, not to safeguard the best interests of the children.

The report **proposes** the following:

- 15-year-olds should be allowed to decide for themselves if they want to change their legal gender.
- 15-year-olds should be allowed to have a sex-change operation, with their parents' consent.
- 12-year-olds should be allowed to change their legal gender, with their parents' consent.

In cases where only one of a child's parents consents to having their 12-year-old daughter regarded officially as a boy, or having their 15-year-old son's penis amputated, while the other parent is opposed, the report recommends that the authorities should have the power to *overrule the opposing parent*:

"If the youth has two legal guardians, both must consent to the procedure in question. To avoid having disputes between guardians affecting the youth, we suggest a legal amendment. This suggested amendment seeks to give Social Services the power to decide that *permission can be given without one guardian's approval*, if that is in the best interest of the child." [Author's emphasis.]

The Committee apparently sees no problems at all with this; the only difficulty noted in the report is "that the youth actively chooses to go against the social norms and ideas prevalent in heteronormative society." They assume that parents who do not want their kids to cut away perfectly healthy genitals are bad parents who do not understand what is for their children's own good. There is not a single line in the report to suggest the Committee gave any thought to the possibility that children who want to change gender might just be passing through just a phase, or having psychological problems, or having problems at home or might later regret such a drastic, irreversible act.

Some critics of the current proposals argue that transsexualism is a kind of mental disorder. Paul R. McHugh, Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, has studied people claiming to be transsexuals for 40 years, during 26 of which he served Psychiatrist-in-Chief at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. McHugh is extremely critical of sex-change in general, and even more so when it comes to children. **He has said** that changing gender is biologically impossible, and that people who undergo gender

reassignment surgery do not *become* the other sex, but rather "they become feminized men or masculinized women."

According to McHugh, people who promote sex-change operations are in fact guilty of encouraging and facilitating mental disorders:

"This intensely felt sense of being transgendered constitutes a mental disorder in two respects. The first is that the idea of sex misalignment is simply mistaken—it does not correspond with physical reality. The second is that it can lead to grim psychological outcomes.

"The transgendered suffer a disorder of 'assumption' like those in other disorders familiar to psychiatrists. With the transgendered, the disordered assumption is that the individual differs from what seems given in nature -- namely one's maleness or femaleness. Other kinds of disordered assumptions are held by those who suffer from anorexia and bulimia nervosa, where the assumption that departs from physical reality is the belief by the dangerously thin that they are overweight."

The Johns Hopkins Hospital, after pioneering sex change operations on the 1960s, discovered that they did not lead to any significant advantages in reality, so in the 1970s they stopped performing the surgery. Most of the people who had the operation were "satisfied," but still had problems; the team decided that the result simply did not justify amputating normal organs.

In an op-ed piece for **The Witherspoon Institute** published in June 2015, McHugh wrote:

"Our efforts, though, had little influence on the emergence of this new idea about sex, or upon the expansion of the number of 'transgendered' among young and old.

...

"Over that time, I've watched the phenomenon change and expand in remarkable ways. A rare issue of a few men -- both homosexual and heterosexual men, including some who sought sex-change surgery because they were erotically aroused by the thought or image of themselves as women -- has spread to include women as well as men. Even young boys and girls have begun to present themselves as of the opposite sex. Over the last ten or fifteen years, this phenomenon has

increased in prevalence, seemingly exponentially. Now, almost everyone has heard of or met such a person."

The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL), has grown into the country's most powerful lobbying organization -- by far -- during the last few years. Moreover, unlike the United States, where **strict rules** regulate lobbying organizations and how they are allowed to influence decision makers, in Sweden it is the government itself that finances the RFSL. The state, municipalities and authorities give tens of millions of kronor to the RFSL every year -- money the organization then uses to influence the very same state, municipalities and authorities that pay them. No one knows how much money we are talking about, because the RFSL is a nonprofit organization that does not fall under the "**Principle of Public Access**" to official documents, and they refuse to disclose how much money they are getting in government grants.

Since 2008, the RFSL has increased its income by selling so-called "**HBT Certifications**": courses for people working in libraries, health clinics, municipalities and so on. It is nearly impossible for an outsider to gain insight into what is being taught in these courses, but several participants have told this author that it is all about getting everyone to "think the same way." The RFSL demands that every single staff member take the course for a workplace to be certified, and every other year the certification needs to be done all over again -- generating yet more revenue for the RFSL.

Last year, *Dispatch International* **revealed** that after certifying workplaces, the RFSL also appoints a few people in each workplace to act as informants. Then, if an employee tells an inappropriate gay joke by the water cooler, that person is immediately reported to the RFSL, which may take action against the employer -- who, in turn, may reprimand or fire the employee.

The RFSL has virtually free access to all of Sweden's schools. RFSL activists are allowed to use classrooms to propagandize against so-called heteronormativity, and promote all other kinds of sexual expressions -- *except* heterosexuality. As children are suggestible, one cannot but wonder if this school campaign is the cause of the record number of children **seeking treatment** for gender dysphoria at the Astrid Lindgren Children's Hospital in Stockholm. Administrators there estimate that 100 gender dysphoric children will come to them for help this year -- three times as many as in 2013.

In an article published in *The Wall Street Journal*, Professor McHugh **writes** that "[w]hen children who reported transgender feelings were tracked without medical or surgical treatment at both Vanderbilt University and London's Portman Clinic, 70%-80% of them spontaneously lost those feelings." There are also treatments that aim to make the children feel comfortable with their biological sex, instead of fueling their gender dysphoria. Psychologist and gender identity specialist Ken Zucker at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, Canada, provides just such a treatment. His clinic, too, has seen a steady rise in the number of children suffering confusion about their gender.

In 2008, Zucker's clinic published **a study** on 25 girls who had come there as children; only 12% still had gender dysphoria as adults. The same statistics apply to boys. According to Zucker, when the children see therapists and others who assume that they actually belong to the opposite sex, the children can actually be led into a gender dysphoric identity.

The Swedish government may thus be on the way to leading thousands of children into gender confusion and unnecessary surgery, the outcome of which is rarely good. The Committee's report is now being studied by the relevant authorities, whose comments will be compiled in November. After that, the Swedish government will decide on how to proceed with its recommendations.

While Gatestone Institute stands by the articles written for it to date by Ingrid Carlqvist, Gatestone is no longer affiliated with her in any way.

[1] Transsexualism is not to be confused with **DSD**, Disorders of Sex Development, a medical condition in which a child is born with ambiguous genitalia. About 5-10 children with some kind of genital anomaly are born each year in Sweden, and the goal is always to determine the child's gender as soon as possible. Surgery is performed at an appropriate time.

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