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### **WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS**

by Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst

In May of 2016, President Obama issued an edict that all school children could declare their own gender and use the restroom, locker room and shower of their choice.

Thankfully, the newly-appointed Attorney General has since rescinded that order, saying it was done "without due regard for the primary role of the states."

I agree, which is why I've been joined by over a dozen of my fellow state senators in authoring the Texas Privacy Act (SB 6).

The bill codifies what most Texans already expect. The act designates separate showers, locker rooms and restrooms for males and females in public schools, colleges, universities and government facilities.

Let's be clear, when we talk about a child declaring their own gender, we are talking about allowing male students to enter the female restroom and locker room. Unless we define boundaries, young men who are "curious" or hold more nefarious goals will be free to experiment, while girls and parents are left legally powerless. Schools will face lawsuits, and pit parents against school boards, as we have already seen in Fort Worth, Dripping Springs, and Pearland.

Texas must set a sensible, non-discriminatory gender policy, or someone else will do it for us.

We must put safety, and dignity ahead of social engineering that is disguised as civil rights. The Texas Privacy Act is inclusive, allowing personal accommodations for special circumstances while also respecting those who do not consent to a male entering a female restroom.

Let's remember that parental rights and women's rights are indeed human rights.

Victims of sexual abuse often say that predators will seek any opportunity. The media has painstakingly ignored this point, instead framing the issue in every other context imaginable.

Some have made predictions that our economy may suffer if our state passes SB 6.

The opposite is true.

SB 6 allows private businesses to make their own decisions, while providing clear direction to public schools and government buildings, which will bolster our economy.

A superb example is Houston, where voters supported a pro-privacy policy, then went on to successfully host the NCAA Final Four and the Super Bowl. Or look at North Carolina, which posted a \$425 million budget surplus and announced 5,000 new jobs after addressing the issue.

Much has been made of the claim that our state may lose an entertainment or sporting event if SB 6 is passed. By this logic, where exactly does the boycott threat end? Do sports teams and Hollywood stars next decide our healthcare policy?

Texas is the tenth largest economy in the world. We cannot sell our children's safety for thirty pieces of silver, or any price quoted by political shakedown operatives.

As a former NCAA athlete, I am a product of Title IX and the advancements made in women's athletics. Since Title IX began in 1972, we have seen a 600% increase in college women's sports. Unless we act, those advancements may erode into a gender-fluid swamp of litigation.

If males can instantly declare to be female, then what becomes of female athletics, or women's rights for that matter?

The Obama order was based on an idea that Washington D.C. can tell us that gender boundaries no longer exist. Unfortunately, anyone who disagrees may be labeled as intolerant or bullied into silence.

This bill is about more than bathrooms; something much deeper is at stake.

Texas was built on a moral foundation. Sam Houston spoke of "doing right," and risking the consequences. Houston's words still ring true, but incredibly today we risk consequences for the high crime of defending a woman and child's safety.

Out-of-state activists have arrived to derail SB 6, but we won't be deterred.

My job is to protect everyone's rights and tell the truth, even if I draw the wrath of liberal elites or agenda-driven journalists.

And the truth is that we need, and deserve the Texas Privacy Act.

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