

Whether you're trans or not, the gender police are coming for you too

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The gender police need to see your documents now

It was supposed to be a fun school sports event for young kids. Instead it turned into an altercation that went viral and made [international news](#). A nine-year-old girl was getting ready to take her turn at a shot put event in British Columbia, Canada, when a belligerent 67-year-old man called Josef Tesar intervened and allegedly accused the girl of being a boy or transgender. The girl had short hair, you see, and apparently didn't fit Tesar's precise specifications of femininity. Since she didn't immediately pass the Tesar test, he wanted proof that the girl was born female before she was allowed to continue. The competition was disrupted and the girl ended the day in tears.

There are, I should note, some discrepancies over the details of exactly what happened from the four adults involved: Heidi and Kari Starr, the girl's mothers, and Josef and Krista Tesar, the grandparents of another child participating. Kari Starr, for example, has said Josef Tesar yelled "at length" directly at her daughter. Josef Tesar denies this and claims he "just" approached a person officiating the event to say he thought there was a boy competing in the girls' event and asking to see a certificate to prove she was a girl.

Heidi Starr also said in a [Facebook post](#) that Krista Tesar shouted that she "was a genital mutilator, a groomer and a pedophile". Tesar told a local news organization that was false. "I said something appropriate. Not those words ... Maybe something like 'F off.'"

While exact accounts of what happened may vary, the bottom line is the same: a young girl had her day ruined because a man decided she didn't look feminine enough and took it upon himself to be the gender police.

It's not just the Tesars who are at fault here. What happened on that sports field obviously didn't happen in a vacuum: it's a direct result of the current war on trans people. Every day it seems like there is a new anti-trans bill being passed; every day some high-profile media commentator or rightwing politician comes out with more dehumanising rhetoric about trans people.

The war on trans people isn't just a trans issue. Ultimately, it's a war on anyone who doesn't conform to narrow gender norms. There are plenty of [documented instances](#) of cis women being harassed in bathrooms, for example, because they've been mistaken for trans women. And this incident in Canada isn't the first time a student athlete has had their gender questioned. Last year a Utah high school launched an investigation into a student's gender after complaints from parents that she "doesn't look feminine enough". They ended up looking at her school records all the way back to the kindergarten to [confirm she wasn't trans](#).

Where does this end? Will women have to start carrying around their birth certificates to gain entry to single-sex bathrooms? Will [genital inspections](#) become a standard part of school sports? Will women

who have short hair get branded as “gender traitors” and be forced by the state to grow their hair to an acceptable length? That certainly seems to be the future that the right wing wants.

Nobody should need to be convinced to care about trans people’s rights. Nobody should need to be convinced that trans rights and gay rights and women’s rights are all inextricably intertwined. But if you do need convincing then I hope you can look at that story from a kids’ sports event in Canada and realize that this panic over trans people isn’t neatly confined to the trans population. Unless you fit the very narrow specifications of what conservatives think a woman looks and acts like, they are going to come for you too.

There ain’t nothing wrong with being a trad wife’

This was rightwing commentator [Benny Johnson’s message](#) to a bunch of young conservative women who attended the recent Young Women’s Leadership Summit held at the Gaylord Texan hotel. The annual event sees a bunch of young women get together to chat about how life was far better before all this feminism business came along. They can also buy “biblically inspired cosmetics”, anti-woke tampons, and pose for photos by signs saying things like “Birth control is so last year”.