

# My Take on the Substantive Issues

by Steve Bloom

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The dispute between the National Lavender Caucus and the Georgia Green Party regarding the “International Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights” presently confronts our national party with a choice that is going to be destructive no matter what choice is made.

It shouldn’t have to be that way.

Both sides in the dispute bear some considerable measure of blame for this difficulty, because each of them poses the political issues in dispute as a zero-sum game: an affirmation of one position requires a rejection of the other, full stop. “There is no middle ground” is a phrase I have heard often from my gender-critical radical-feminist friends. Clearly the forces allied with the National Lavender Caucus feel the same way. I insist, however, that the task of reasonable people in the Green Party and elsewhere is to create the middle ground we need to begin to inhabit on this issue, even if we have to pull both the most militant wing of the NLC and of the GCRFs kicking and screaming into that process.

On one issue and one issue only I place 100 percent of the blame on the NLC forces: They are the ones who reject a coexistence in the broad-tent of the Green Party including those with whom they disagree on questions of sex and gender. The NLC calls for the expulsion of Georgia. There is no reciprocal call by the Georgia Party or by the consciously GCRF members of the US Green Party for the expulsion of the NLC. That’s why I have so far been able to work with GCRF elements in Dialogue not Expulsion, because the goal of that formation is to avoid a split in the party over this question.

There are many political issues where the Green Party has different wings, broad currents which affirm opposite sides of important issues—and where we simply agree to disagree. The civil war in Syria can be noted as the clearest example. Those on each side of this question might, quite reasonably, make a case that the other is in violation of our Ten Key Values. And yet no one would consider expelling someone else based on their viewpoint regarding the Syrian civil war. Likewise with the divide between ecosocialists and green capitalists. We find ways to coexist.

It is my judgment that we should be able to carve out a reasonable *modus operandi* on the sex/gender question too, where those on both sides look for ways to coexist and build a common party—based on our collective goal of forging a genuinely independent electoral alternative in the USA.

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On the substantive questions in dispute all I can do is express my personal viewpoint. I know that many will not agree with that viewpoint. Still, it’s my hope that if others consider my specific perspective on the substantive issues it might help generate an understanding of why I believe it’s possible to create a middle ground, and why I see this as perhaps the most important task:

1) I will personally use whatever pronouns or identifications someone else prefers. To me it seems like a matter of common courtesy.

2) I believe there is a genuine psychological/physiological reality that is accurately captured by the phrase “a woman trapped in a man’s body,” even if this is only a poetic or metaphorical description. I cannot identify any biological or psychological cause for this phenomenon—any more than I can identify the biological or psychological cause of same-sex attraction. I know that same-sex attraction is real nonetheless, something deeply ingrained in the character of those individual human beings who are same-sex attracted which they have no control over. There are transgendered individuals who feel compelled, in a similar way, to live as if they were the opposite sex from the one indicated by their biology at birth.

3) I believe it is correct for society to acknowledge the reality of trans, to encourage the acceptance and understanding of trans people, make discrimination against trans people illegal, try to make violence against trans people a thing of the past, while adapting itself in reasonable ways so that trans people can live the life they feel compelled to.

4) At the same time I reject the assertion, which the present trans movement has put at the heart of trans liberation, that no distinction of any importance to political people (or to others) exists, therefore, between transwomen and women who are born with a female reproductive anatomy, that biological sex is as much a matter of personal choice as gender (as fluid and socially-defined as gender), and that any attempt to organize based on sex, indeed even to identify individuals based on their sex or talk about the reality of sex rather than gender, is reactionary and “transphobic” by definition.

Women who are born with a female reproductive anatomy have faced oppression by patriarchal society for thousands of years based on their sex—the reproductive anatomy just named. In large part this is rooted in the need patriarchy has to control that reproductive anatomy. Issues that affect those who are born with a female reproductive anatomy range from abortion rights to female genital mutilation and infanticide. Transwomen do not face this kind of oppression, even though transwomen too are oppressed by patriarchy. The common oppression by patriarchy does not erase the differences, any more than the common oppression by a racist culture means that there are no distinctions we need to take note of between Blacks in the USA and Puerto Ricans, or that Blacks who choose to organize via Black Caucuses are “Puerto-Rican Exclusionists.”

I am willing to accept the phrase “transwomen are women” if it is spoken in the spirit of still recognizing that there are distinctions that matter socially and politically between transwomen and women who were born with a female reproductive anatomy. I reject that phrase if it is used in an attempt to erase any and all distinctions. Passenger cars are motor vehicles. Eighteen-wheelers are motor vehicles too. It would be absurd to conclude from this that no conceptual or legal distinctions need to be made between passenger cars and eighteen-wheelers.

Unfortunately, the present ideology of the trans movement uses the idea that “transwomen are women” in the wrong way, in a conscious attempt to erase the reality of sex, in particular of any legal distinctions based on sex (and the oppression of women as a sex), and therefore any need of women born with a female reproductive anatomy to organize as an independent social force affected by a specific and unique kind of oppression.

5) In that context there is much to be discussed and negotiated. Answers that satisfactorily accommodate all of the concerns will not be easy to find. But they do still have to be sought—in a supportive and collaborative spirit rather than one that is hostile and antagonistic.

6) Because I identify much that needs to be discussed and negotiated, and also based on simple democratic principles, I reject the tactics of “deplatforming” gender-critical voices, of doxxing and

otherwise actively harassing those—women especially but not only women—who raise questions about the current trans orthodoxy, declaring them to be reactionary and nothing better than racists. The use of these methods needs to be renounced by trans activists and actively combated by everyone.

7) On one substantive issue I am convinced that the current ideology of the trans movement, and the adaptation to it by a liberal establishment, is doing irreparable harm: The acceptance of medical protocols—by both the medical establishment and the psychiatric establishment—which encourage individuals as young as 12 or 13, who were born with a female reproductive anatomy, to have perfectly normal and healthy breasts surgically removed, also to take puberty-blockers and then powerful hormones which will leave them sterile for life—all in an attempt to transition to being “men.” Note the emphasis on the word “encourage” in that last sentence. This is not something that is being provided as a last-choice remedy in clearly demonstrable cases of need. It is something that is being actively encouraged, as soon as the thought “I am/want to be a boy, not a girl” occurs to the young person in question. It is encouraged by peers, by teachers and school counselors, by professional psychologists, and by medical doctors. Parents who even raise the possibility of some other approach to the thought “I am/want to be a boy, not a girl,” are often threatened with a loss of custody of their children if they refuse to consent to these kinds of medical interventions. Psychologists or medical doctors who might like to suggest alternatives are faced with the prospect of having their licenses revoked if they do so.

Whatever else happens in the wake of the current movement for trans liberation, it is my view that these medical protocols will be looked back on in 30 to 50 years (perhaps a lot sooner) as one of the great medical scandals of the 21st century.

Two powerful video presentations for anyone who would like to consider this topic more on their own:

a) “Dysphoric” a four-part documentary series: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRU9NIX0AA143z2QKukQcOqS96qriKGyw>

b) An episode of an on-line interview show called “Triggernometry.” It’s a conversation with Abigail Shrier, author of a book called *The Trans Issue Shouldn't Be Political*:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uqht5dcJAI&feature=youtu.be>

8) The “International Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights” is a flawed text which I will not personally put my name on. Its flaw lies in its failure to acknowledge the realities outlined in points 1 through 3 above. The document is, nonetheless, also a valid attempt to raise genuine concerns about points 4, 6, and 7. Thus I can understand why others, who do not share my personal assessment of points 1 through 3 (and even some who do share that assessment), consider the valid defense of women’s sex-based rights in this text to be a sufficient reason to add their names. Signatures on the document thus represent a political statement about the rights of women and girls who are born with a female reproductive anatomy. They are in no way an expression of “transphobia” in the sense this term is reasonably used: a fear or hatred of individuals who are trans.

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We are, thus, confronted with a political disagreement that needs to be addressed in a political way: by a political discussion. It should not be the grounds for threats of expulsion from the US Green Party.