

U of T prof rips bill outlawing gender identity discrimination

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University of Toronto Prof. Jordan Peterson in his home in Toronto on Thursday, September 29, 2016. (Dave Abel/Toronto Sun)

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TORONTO - An outspoken Toronto scholar is calling for the downing of a federal bill aimed at outlawing gender identity discrimination and is refusing to use anything other than “he” or “she” in reference to others. [In an hour-long YouTube video](#), University of Toronto psychology Prof. Jordan Peterson calls Bill C-16, legislation that would amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code to add gender identity and expression as prohibited forms of discrimination, a slippery slope to forming an authoritarian society bereft of discussion and debate around such subjects.

Bill C-16 was introduced by the Justin Trudeau government in May and has passed first reading in Ottawa. Its aim is to protect those identifying themselves as transgender or non-binary.

“I think (Bill C-16) risks criminalizing discussion about aspects of human sexual behaviour and identity that we need to discuss,” said Peterson, explaining that there are layers to C-16 — the biology of sex, gender identity and gender expression, for example — that could cause problems down the road.

“The proposition is that these three things vary independently from one another. The problem I have with the legislation is that it is unclear whether challenging that proposition has become criminalized, and I think it is a fully challengeable proposition because I don’t think there is any evidence at all that biological sex and gender identity are actually independent,” Peterson said.

“There are exceptions, but in 98% of the cases, if you are biologically male, then your gender identity is male and if you are biologically female, your gender identity is female.”

Peterson also refuses to use non-binary pronouns such as “zhe” in reference to others — even if they request it. He told the Sun that the watering down of “fundamental axioms” such as “he” and “she” is a recipe for social strife.

“I believe (words such as ‘zhe’) are vanguards of a radical leftist ideology. People who would have us use those words say the reason we should use them is so we don’t ... exclude people who don’t fit in ... It isn’t obvious to me that in the long run it will make those people feel better. I think challenging traditional gender constructs is extraordinarily dangerous. You always upset people when you question their fundamental axioms (such as he and she).”

A spokesman with U of T says that while Peterson is entitled to his views, he is also expected to follow university policies, including “the right to equal treatment without discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.”

“We do expect all members of our community, including Professor Peterson, to comply with U of T’s policies ... around creating a learning environment here that is free from discrimination and harassment,” the spokesman said.

As of late Thursday, the university hadn’t received any complaints about Peterson, she said.

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