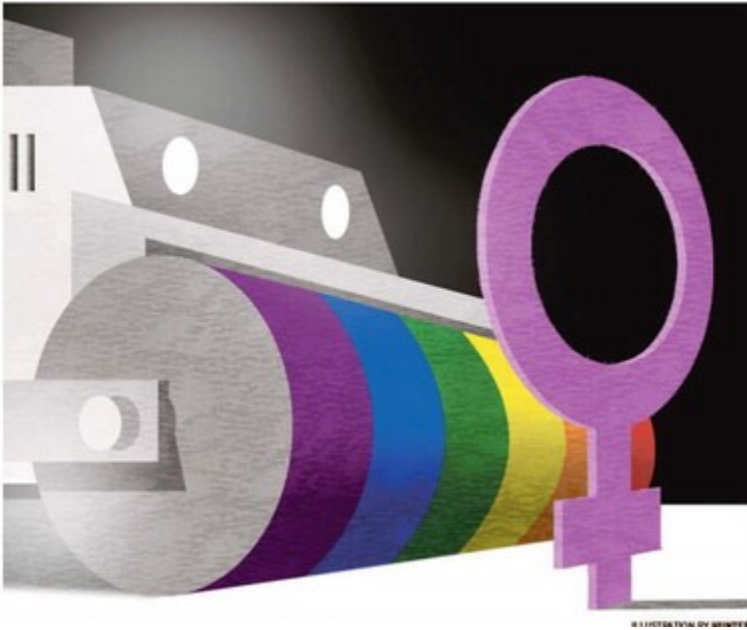


Bring back real feminism

A culture that can't agree on what a woman is can't sustain a feminist movement

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In the 19th and 20th centuries, feminists courageously worked to achieve women's equality with men. They ensured women won the right to vote and attain equal opportunities in the workplace. Feminists also played a role in passing the Title IX legislation designed to protect women from discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities. The world is a better place for women because of those feminists.

As a widespread cultural movement, however, feminism has died. Over the past couple of years, my experiences on college campuses have given me a firsthand lesson in the decline of

feminism. One of my key messages to students on college campuses is that abortion is anti-woman. I make robust arguments to this effect, demonstrating how Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion vendor, betrays women and how the abortion industry puts profit above women's wellbeing across the board.

I now consistently interact with students who can be more offended by my assertion that abortion affects women than by my descriptions of heinous abortion procedures or Planned Parenthood neglecting to report child sexual abuse. We live in a culture where we can offend others by asserting that only biological women have wombs or periods and that people who don't have female organs aren't women.

NPR recently kowtowed to this growing audience's ire in an article discussing the fairness of taxing pads and tampons. In the piece, NPR referred to women as "people who menstruate." That's a waste of 11 letters when they could have just said, women.

However, as someone regularly confronted by young people who are offended by the reality of binary sex, I understand the desire to placate the angry reader. Or, in my case, the angry audience member. I was recently upbraided by an angry student at Western Washington University in Washington State, for example, for asserting that people with wombs are women. Would it be easier to go along with the constantly changing whims of gender theory than to maintain the scientific truth that there are two sexes? Yes. But we can't do that if we care about feminism.

It's women who get steamrolled when we fail to stand for the biological reality that male and female are the only two sexes and that they are different.

It is women who lose college athletic scholarships when Title IX ceases to recognize binary sex and instead lets boys who wish they were girls compete in women's athletics. It is women who lose

privacy and security in restrooms and locker rooms when politicians decide that men should have access to our private spaces on the basis of gender theory. It is women who are expected to sacrifice their children in abortion when their ability to grow new humans is viewed as an inconvenience. A culture that can't agree on what a woman is can't sustain a feminist movement.

If feminism were alive, it would be putting a stop to the anti-woman norms that pervade our culture. Real feminists would tell high school boys that they cannot take scholarships from female athletes. They would demand that women be protected from the intrusion of men into locker rooms and restrooms. Real feminists would tell NPR that those who endure monthly cramps and childbirth aren't androgynous "people who menstruate," but women — the only segment of the population whose bodies can grow new human beings.

Instead, the women's movement has ignored women's need for empowerment in all segments of their lives, at school, at work and at home, making ending life through abortion the pinnacle of their version of female empowerment. A diverse movement that once respected women as a rising force in the culture has defined all our hopes and dreams down to one thing — abortion. That's on display now with the obsession with passing the 100-year old ERA amendment even though it will harm women's interests as it forces a stronger hook for abortion into the Constitution. In a NARAL fundraising email sent in March 2019, their chief lobbyist wrote, "In order to protect our reproductive freedom today it's essential we pass the newly re-introduced bill to ratify the ERA. With its ratification, the ERA would reinforce the constitutional right to abortion by clarifying that the sexes have equal rights, which would require judges to strike down anti-abortion laws because they violate both the constitutional right to privacy and sexual equality." Ending preborn life does not make women equal to men. It just ends the lives of other women (and men) who deserve their chance to make a difference.

Our culture needs real feminists now as much as ever.

Kristan Hawkins is president of Students for Life of America. Follow her @KristanHawkins or subscribe to her podcast, Explicitly Pro-Life.

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