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## GSA and GSA<sup>2</sup> Condemn Bill 9 and Anti-Trans Legislation

**The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and its internal sub-committee, the Gender and Sexuality Alliance of the GSA (GSA<sup>2</sup>), condemn the Alberta Government's decision to pre-emptively invoke the notwithstanding clause through Bill 9 to protect anti-trans legislation Bills 26, 27, and 29 from legal challenges.**

**We call upon the Alberta Government to repeal Bill 9 and Bills 26, 27, and 29, and we urge the University of Calgary to meaningfully engage with and support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as these harmful policies take effect.**

On December 9<sup>th</sup> the Government of Alberta passed Bill 9: *Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act*, which pre-emptively invokes the notwithstanding clause to shield, anti-trans legislation, Bill 26, 27, and 29 from legal challenge. These bills collectively restrict and undermine the rights of transgender and gender diverse individuals to access health care, use their name and pronouns in schools, and participate in sport.

"It is clear that these bills (*Bill 26, 27, & 29 and Bill 9*) are a direct attack on transgender individuals, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all those in Canada," says Brandon Pattar, Vice Chair of Advocacy GSA<sup>2</sup>. "Given recent developments, it is our hope that the government will strongly consider withdrawing the bill."

On campus, this legislative agenda will create tremendous barriers and a climate of intimidation for gender diverse individuals and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community more broadly.

### **Fairness and safety in sport legislation impact at University of Calgary**

For the graduate student community, the most immediate impacts of these misguided bills will arise from the "Fairness in Sports" legislation. The *Fairness and Safety in Sport Act* is a blatant attack on transgender girls and women, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community more broadly. These are regulations in search of a problem that does not exist, fueling anti-trans rhetoric and inserting the government into the personal decisions of everyday Albertans.

"This regulation does not address any fairness or safety issues already established by experts, including financial restrictions, facility access, refereeing biases, cultural and

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racial equity, youth development, concussions and brain injuries, harassment, abuse, mental health, or injury recovery,” says Pattar.

U Sports itself has flagged these policies as a concern for Alberta’s ability to host events and provincial tournaments. The legislation does not reflect international standards of fairness, safety, inclusion, nor evidence-based research and meaningful consultation with transgender students and athletes. The regulation focuses on restricting transgender women from participating in sports based on fear, hatred, and misinformation. The University of Calgary implemented a Fairness and Safety in Sport policy on September 1<sup>st</sup> as required by Bill 29.

“By adopting this policy, the University of Calgary has amplified the attack on transgender students, resulting in significant negative impacts to the broader 2SLGBTQIA+ community on campus” says Wylie Pietsch, Chair of GSA<sup>2</sup>. “As an institution that claims to promote the value of inclusion and the importance of following expert knowledge and research, it is crucial that the University meaningfully resist this blatantly discriminatory and misogynistic legislation and protect the safety and health of students and athletes.”

### **Students flight**

Bills 26, 27, and 29 are an attack on 2SLGBTQIA+ graduate students and children creating institutional barriers that affect their lives. Further, Bill 9’s use of the notwithstanding clause restricts the rights of gender diverse graduate students and families by limiting their access to healthcare, learning, and sport.

“Graduate students are questioning whether they can stay at the University of Calgary or in Alberta at all given this is the direction the province is moving,” says Wylie Pietsch. “I already know several current and incoming graduate students who have made the difficult decision to leave.”

Many graduate students seeking to build their lives and families no longer feel safe or welcome in this province. These policies risk driving students away, taking with them skills, knowledge, and community connections essential to Alberta’s prosperity.

**These bills represent a significant infringement of rights, which will jeopardize the safety, health, and academic success of transgender and gender diverse students.**

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**The GSA and GSA<sup>2</sup> stand firmly with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and call on the Government of Alberta to reverse this harmful legislation and on the University of Calgary to actively protect its students. We will continue to advocate until every student can study, work, and live in Alberta without fear.**