# Nicola Sturgeon warns Supreme Court ruling risks making trans lives unliveable



Former Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has recently voiced significant concerns regarding the implications of a Supreme Court judgment that potentially redefines the legal meaning of sex, which she argues could severely impact the lives of transgender individuals. Speaking at the How the Light Gets In festival in Hay-on-Wye, Sturgeon reiterated that the ruling might render the lives of transgender people "almost unliveable." This statement was fuelled by her interpretation of the judgment and its aftermath, which she believes has been "massively overinterpreted."

Sturgeon’s remarks reflect her longstanding commitment to transgender rights, a stance she has made clear during her time in office. She expressed frustration with the interim guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which states that in certain public spaces, such as hospitals and restaurants, trans women should not have access to women's facilities. The potential fallout from this guidance has raised fears among many trans individuals, complicating their ability to navigate everyday life with dignity. For instance, Dylan Hamilton, a trans man working within the Scottish Parliament, described the directive as a “personal attack on my dignity that I will have to experience every day.”

The Supreme Court's ruling, which concluded that biological sex must be the operative definition under equality law, has sparked considerable debate. Critics of the decision, including Sturgeon and other political figures, have argued that it invites a narrow interpretation that threatens the rights and safety of transgender people. She stated, “If it is the case that the judgment means we have to move to a situation where trans lives are almost impossible to live then I’m sorry but the law has to change because that is not an acceptable way to be.”

This discourse comes at a time when the Scottish Parliament has taken steps to restrict access to single-sex spaces for transgender individuals, heightening the urgency of Sturgeon’s calls for lawmakers to reconsider these provisions. Social Justice Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville has echoed these sentiments, indicating that the EHRC’s guidance has exacerbated the anxiety surrounding access to single-sex spaces.

The legal landscape surrounding transgender rights continues to be shaped by public opinion and judicial interpretations. Some argue that the Supreme Court's decision, supported by organisations such as For Women Scotland, has been mischaracterised by trans activists. Susan Smith from For Women Scotland critiqued Sturgeon, suggesting it was ironic that the first female First Minister would dismiss biological sex as a nebulous concept. Meanwhile, Dr Lucy Hunter from the policy analysis group Murray Blackburn Mackenzie argued that organisations should align their practices with the Supreme Court's clear reasoning, rather than rely on interpretations driven by past assumptions.

Sturgeon’s advocacy for a balanced approach, respecting both women's rights and the dignity of trans individuals, underscores the complex and ongoing dialogue within Scottish politics regarding gender identity and rights. Her comments not only highlight the fragility of transgender rights in the face of legal rulings but also call for a comprehensive reassessment of existing laws to ensure that they do not inadvertently marginalise a vulnerable community.

As this issue remains at the forefront of political discourse, Sturgeon’s perspectives serve as a reminder of the need for nuanced conversations that take into account the lived realities of all individuals affected by these legal frameworks.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25189837.sturgeon-law-may-need-change-supreme-court-ruling/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/may/06/transgender-peoples-lives-at-risk-of-being-made-unliveable-says-nicola-sturgeon)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25189837.sturgeon-law-may-need-change-supreme-court-ruling/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.holyrood.com/news/view%2Cnicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-judgment-risks-making-trans-lives-unliveable)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25189837.sturgeon-law-may-need-change-supreme-court-ruling/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/sturgeon-warns-trans-lives-could-become-unliveable-after-supreme-court-ruling-AYQVI55IDFP7PFSMBKXUW7HM5Q/), [[5]](https://care.org.uk/news/2025/05/sturgeon-criticises-supreme-court-ruling-on-single-sex-spaces)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25189837.sturgeon-law-may-need-change-supreme-court-ruling/?ref=rss), [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/nicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-ehrc-scotland-joanna-cherry-b2745631.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25189837.sturgeon-law-may-need-change-supreme-court-ruling/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.holyrood.com/news/view%2Cnicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-judgment-risks-making-trans-lives-unliveable), [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/nicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-ehrc-scotland-joanna-cherry-b2745631.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25189837.sturgeon-law-may-need-change-supreme-court-ruling/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/may/06/transgender-peoples-lives-at-risk-of-being-made-unliveable-says-nicola-sturgeon> - Former Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon expressed concern that the Supreme Court's ruling on the legal definition of a woman could make the lives of transgender people 'unliveable'. She emphasized the need for interpretations that protect both women and allow trans individuals to live with dignity. Sturgeon also highlighted the importance of political decisions in shaping the law, rather than solely relying on judicial interpretations. The article discusses the implications of the ruling and the balance between women's rights and transgender rights.
3. <https://www.holyrood.com/news/view%2Cnicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-judgment-risks-making-trans-lives-unliveable> - Nicola Sturgeon warned that the Supreme Court's judgment defining sex as biological could make transgender lives 'unliveable'. She questioned how the ruling would be implemented in practice, emphasizing the need to protect both women and trans individuals. Sturgeon expressed concern over interim guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) that could restrict trans people's access to single-sex spaces. She advocated for a balanced approach that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/sturgeon-warns-trans-lives-could-become-unliveable-after-supreme-court-ruling-AYQVI55IDFP7PFSMBKXUW7HM5Q/> - Nicola Sturgeon expressed concern that the Supreme Court's ruling on the definition of a woman could make transgender lives 'unliveable'. She emphasized the need for interpretations that protect both women and allow trans individuals to live with dignity. Sturgeon also highlighted the importance of political decisions in shaping the law, rather than solely relying on judicial interpretations. The article discusses the implications of the ruling and the balance between women's rights and transgender rights.
5. <https://care.org.uk/news/2025/05/sturgeon-criticises-supreme-court-ruling-on-single-sex-spaces> - Former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon criticized the Supreme Court's ruling defining sex as biological, warning it could make transgender lives 'almost unliveable'. She expressed concern over interim guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) that restricts trans women's access to single-sex spaces. Sturgeon emphasized the need for interpretations that protect both women and allow trans individuals to live with dignity. The article discusses the implications of the ruling and the balance between women's rights and transgender rights.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/nicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-ehrc-scotland-joanna-cherry-b2745631.html> - Nicola Sturgeon warned that the Supreme Court's judgment on the definition of a woman could make transgender lives 'unliveable'. She questioned how the ruling would be implemented in practice, emphasizing the need to protect both women and trans individuals. Sturgeon also highlighted the importance of political decisions in shaping the law, rather than solely relying on judicial interpretations. The article discusses the implications of the ruling and the balance between women's rights and transgender rights.
7. <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/uk/nicola-sturgeon-says-trans-lives-could-be-almost-unliveable-after-supreme-court/> - Nicola Sturgeon expressed concern that the Supreme Court's ruling on the definition of a woman could make transgender lives 'almost unliveable'. She emphasized the need for interpretations that protect both women and allow trans individuals to live with dignity. Sturgeon also highlighted the importance of political decisions in shaping the law, rather than solely relying on judicial interpretations. The article discusses the implications of the ruling and the balance between women's rights and transgender rights.