# Nicola Sturgeon warns Supreme Court ruling on 'woman' definition risks trans lives becoming unliveable



Nicola Sturgeon, the former First Minister of Scotland, has raised alarms over the recent Supreme Court ruling that firmly defines 'woman' and 'sex' as biological categories under the Equality Act 2010. Speaking at the How the Light Gets In festival in Hay-on-Wye, she claimed this ruling could render the lives of transgender individuals "unliveable." Such a statement is striking, especially as society grapples with growing dissatisfaction with the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) interim guidance, which restricts trans women from accessing women’s spaces in essential public settings.

While Sturgeon asserts that the Supreme Court’s ruling clarifies necessary legal definitions, many observers see her interpretation as a misguided overreach that neglects the core issues at stake. “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,” she stated, revealing a perspective that poses a potential threat to the hard-won rights of women. This sentiment underscores a critical conversation about the balance between safeguarding women's spaces and addressing the needs of the transgender community.

The judgment has triggered a polarizing response. Critics argue that the EHRC's guidance creates unnecessary fear and vulnerability among trans individuals. Dylan Hamilton, a trans man working within the Scottish Parliament, lamented that “a personal attack on my dignity” is now an everyday experience under the new policy. Such emotional and psychological ramifications should not be taken lightly, as they expose serious flaws in current legislative interpretations.

Social justice secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville echoed Sturgeon’s concerns, yet her remarks fail to address the very real implications of the ruling for women. The clarity of the judgment has left many questioning whether it genuinely serves to protect both women's rights and those of the transgender community.

On the contrary, proponents of the ruling like Susan Smith from For Women Scotland argue that Sturgeon and her allies are misinterpreting the legal standards. Smith contends that the ruling was aimed precisely at clarifying the legal standing of sex and gender, emphasizing the need for strict adherence to what the Supreme Court has established. The ongoing debate, she argues, is mired in a haze of misinformation that distorts the issue.

Dr. Lucy Hunter from the policy analysis group Murray Blackburn Mackenzie highlights the necessity for organizations to comply with the ruling, cautioning against misinterpretations perpetuated by some activists. She insists that the court's ruling should guide policy actions in a way that upholds the law rather than bows to political pressures.

As Sturgeon remains a vocal advocate for transgender rights, her previous attempts to reform gender recognition laws find her wedged between contrasting social responsibilities and powerful new policies. The former UK government’s obstruction of these reforms has only intensified the struggle for equality, leaving many to wonder whether this new Labour government can address the concerns of all involved.

The ongoing debate underscores the complexities of legislative practice and the urgency of honest discussions in a changing societal landscape. The challenge now lies in striking a delicate balance that genuinely upholds the rights and dignity of both women and the transgender community—without compromising the legal definitions established by the court.

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, which defined 'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act as referring to biological sex, could make the lives of transgender people 'unliveable'. She criticized the Equality and Human Rights Commission's interim guidance, which suggested that trans women should not be permitted to use women's facilities, stating that such interpretations could lead to 'impossibly difficult' situations for transgender individuals. Sturgeon emphasized the need for a balance between protecting women and allowing trans people to live with dignity and safety.
3. <https://www.holyrood.com/news/view%2Cnicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-judgment-risks-making-trans-lives-unliveable> - Nicola Sturgeon, former First Minister of Scotland, warned that the Supreme Court's ruling defining 'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act as referring to biological sex could make the lives of transgender people 'almost unliveable'. She expressed concerns over the Equality and Human Rights Commission's interim guidance, which stated that trans women should not be permitted to use women's facilities. Sturgeon highlighted the importance of translating the court's judgment into practice in a way that protects women while allowing trans people to live with dignity and safety.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/sturgeon-warns-trans-lives-could-become-unliveable-after-supreme-court-ruling-AYQVI55IDFP7PFSMBKXUW7HM5Q/> - Nicola Sturgeon, former First Minister of Scotland, expressed concern that the Supreme Court's ruling, which defined 'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act as referring to biological sex, could make the lives of transgender people 'almost unliveable'. She criticized the Equality and Human Rights Commission's interim guidance, which suggested that trans women should not be permitted to use women's facilities, stating that such interpretations could lead to 'impossibly difficult' situations for transgender individuals. Sturgeon emphasized the need for a balance between protecting women and allowing trans people to live with dignity and safety.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-ehrc-scotland-scottish-government-b1226115.html> - Nicola Sturgeon, former First Minister of Scotland, warned that trans lives could become 'unliveable' following the Supreme Court judgment on the definition of a woman. She expressed concern over how the ruling has been interpreted and emphasized the need to balance protecting women with allowing trans people to live with dignity and safety. Sturgeon also rejected calls for her to apologize to critics of gender self-ID, stating that she 'fundamentally and respectfully disagreed' with such calls.
6. <https://www.holyrood.com/news/view%2Calister-jack-nicola-sturgeon-and-john-swinney-should-publicly-apologise-following-supreme-court-ruling> - Alister Jack, Secretary of State for Scotland, called for Nicola Sturgeon and Deputy First Minister John Swinney to publicly apologize following the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of a woman. Jack criticized the Scottish Government's response to the ruling and suggested that an apology was necessary to address the concerns raised by the court's decision.
7. <https://www.attitude.co.uk/news/uk/nicola-sturgeon-supreme-court-483519/> - Nicola Sturgeon, former First Minister of Scotland, spoke out against the recent Supreme Court ruling which determined that the words 'woman' and 'sex' refer only to 'biological women' in the context of the Equality Act 2010. She raised concern over the interim guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, stating that it could make the lives of trans people 'almost unliveable'. Sturgeon emphasized the need to balance protecting women with allowing trans people to live with dignity and safety.