

# The Monthly Rag

Brought to you by the Feminist and Gender Studies Interns

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The Texas obscenity statute is a slang name for a Texas state law. In 1973 the state legislature passed Section 43.21 of the Texas Penal Code which, in part, prohibits the sale or promotion of "Obscene device[s]" mean[ing] a device including a dildo or artificial vagina, designed or marketed as useful primarily for the stimulation of human genital organs."

Vibrators Not for Sale in Texas

Prosecution under the statute is rare but has occurred on occasion. In 2004, Joanne Webb, a mother of three and a former schoolteacher, faced up to one year in prison for selling a vibrator to two undercover police officers posing as a married couple at a private party. She was later acquitted, and the undercover officers were issued reprimands. In 2007, a lingerie shop was raided, and items "deemed to be illegal by the Texas penal code" were confiscated. The clerk on duty at the time was arrested and may have to register as a sex offender.

Section 43.23 of the code deals with promotion ("A person commits an offense if he...possesses with intent to wholesale promote any obscene material or obscene device. A person who possesses six or more obscene devices...is presumed to possess them with intent to promote the same.") This section carries higher penalties, and for this reason, those businesses that trade in items covered under the act usually market them as "novelties" or "educational items."

<http://lgbt.wikia.com>

**Nobody will ever win the Battle of the Sexes. There's just too much fraternizing with the enemy. ~Henry Kissinger**

## First Person in the World Officially Declared Genderless

by Monique Jessen

Norrie May-Welby is recognized as gender-neutral by Australian authorities, making history in the process.

Happy to live life as neither a man nor a woman, Norrie May-Welby, a sex and gender diverse activist in Sydney, dedicated a lot of time fighting for equal rights. Now, in a ground-breaking move, Australia has made history by acknowledging that May-Welby is indeed gender-free, issuing legal documentation, stating so.

Born as a man, May-Welby was raised in Scotland before emigrating to Australia as a child. Undergoing a sex change operation at the age of 28, he became a woman but was still desperately unhappy so she decided to stop her hormone treatments and live a genderless existence. "I haven't taken hormones for about 20 years, preferring my body and brain to be as they are naturally," it states on the 48-year-old's website.

While the British expat was content, zie (the new legally correct gender-neutral pronoun) had no legal documentation to reference when queried about the issue of sexuality, reports the [Times of Malta](#). With a passport, stating 'female' yet having undergone a sex change operation to become a man, this was naturally confusing, not to mention embarrassing. So having applied to the New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Sydney asking for a 'Sex Not Specified' Recognition Certificate (similar to a birth certificate) finally May-Welby received the paperwork zie had been lobbying for, and the acceptance that went with it.

A spokesman for the UK's Gender Trust said they were fully in support of the decision by the Sydney authorities and hoped that others around the world would follow suit. "Many people like the idea of being genderless," they said, according to Britain's the [Telegraph](#). While May-Welby is still coming to terms with the new found fame, zie remains hopeful of the future ahead for genderless people around the world: "It surprised me to be told I am the first to get such documentation, zie said, adding, "but I know I won't be the last

<http://www.tonic.com>

**Women cannot complain about men anymore until they start getting better taste in them. ~Bill Maher**

**The average woman would rather have beauty than brains, because the average man can see better than he can think. ~Author Unknown**

## "This is what a feminist looks like..."

Being a woman means that I'm going to speak up  
 Being a feminist means I'm probably intimidating only because I'm not doing what you expect me to do  
 Being a feminist means I can think  
 Think quickly  
 Think deeply  
 Think thoroughly  
 Being a woman means that anything I do is a political statement  
 Being a woman means I can think for myself  
 Being a woman does not mean I have to have children  
 It means that me and my kind have the power to give life  
 Being a woman means that I have to be stronger on a daily basis  
 Being a woman means that I am beautiful, priceless, loved, unique, intelligent, strong  
 I am beautiful because of the place I come from, the power I hold  
 I am priceless because nothing can or should be able to buy me, nothing can replace me, because after I am gone I leave a hole in this world that cannot be refilled  
 I am loved because I know I have sisters and mothers and grandmothers out there – millions of them who would give their lives for my freedom  
 And because I would do the same  
 I am unique because there is no other woman or person who sees the world the way I do  
 I am intelligent because I can see problems throughout the world that need to be changed – I am intelligent because I can imagine how to change them  
 I am strong because I have been raised in an environment that is entirely more vicious and complicated than the one that men are raised in

I am proud to be a feminist  
 I am proud to be a woman  
 I would want it  
 No  
 Other  
 Way

By Elle Villalva ~Class of 2011 Sociology Major

Equal Rights Limited by United States Constitution

The [Equal Rights Amendment](#), first proposed in 1923 to affirm that women and men have equal rights under the law, is still not part of the U.S. Constitution.

The ERA was passed out of Congress in 1972 and has been ratified by 35 of the necessary 38 states. When three more states vote yes, it is possible that the ERA could become the 28th Amendment. The ERA could also be ratified by restarting the traditional process of passage by a two-thirds majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives, followed by ratification by legislatures in three-quarters (38) of the 50 states

**Section 1.** Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

**Section 2.** The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

**Section 3.** This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

As supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment between 1972 and 1982 lobbied, marched, rallied, petitioned, picketed, went on hunger strikes, and committed acts of civil disobedience, it is probable that many of them were not aware of their place in the long historical continuum of women's struggle for constitutional equality in the United States. From the very beginning, the inequality of men and women under the Constitution has been an issue for advocacy.

<http://equalrightsamendment.org>

Do you have a question? Something you don't understand? Do you want to know about resources or want more info about our publication?

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