

# ENDEAVOUR FORUM Inc.

NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC of the UN

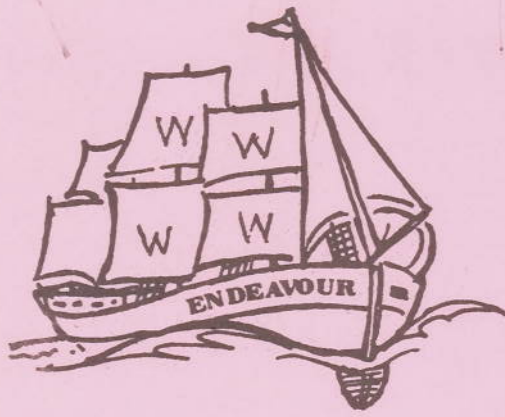
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Mr Peter Hallahan  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Senators,

## Submission on the Effectiveness of the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984

1. Endeavour Forum Inc. is a pro-family women's NGO which has special consultative status with the Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.
2. We attended the 1980 UN Mid-Decade Conference for Women in 1980 at which the Hon. Mr. Ellicott, then Attorney-General, signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. We opposed this Treaty then and we continue to oppose it now as much of it is written in ambiguous language which is open to a range of interpretations. We are also of the view that anti-discrimination legislation should not apply to the private sector. The government is not going to step in an assist a private company or employer who makes wrong decisions about employment or promotion in an attempt to achieve gender or "diversity" balance and thereby wrecks or decreases the profits of the company, therefore the private sector should not have anti-discrimination legislation imposed on it.
  2. (i) Although reproductive technology and adoption come under State or Federal legislation, we are opposed to ART/IVF and/or adoption being made available to unmarried couples, homosexual couples or individuals and single or lesbian women. All the research data show that children thrive best when raised by their married, biological parents. In situations where tragically both parents are deceased, guardianship can be granted to near relatives, but with the shortage of babies and children available for adoption, it is wrong to place the few that are available in a less than ideal situation. There are many heterosexual, married couples who are eager to adopt children.
  - 2 (ii) **It should be pointed out that even the most ardent supporters of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on which the SD Act 1984 is based, never envisaged ART/IVF being made available to single or lesbian women.** The actual result of making ART/IVF available to single or lesbian women is to deprive children of a father. There is a volume of sociological research showing that children who do not have the involvement of a father in their lives suffer from a host of disadvantages in terms of economic and educational achievement, and risk involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime. Indeed, it is the stock plea of defence lawyers on behalf of their clients: "Your Honour, he came from a broken home".



3. There should be no eliminations of the exemptions currently granted to religious bodies, institutions or individuals. Withdrawing such exemptions would be a clear infringement of religious freedom and freedom of conscience. The Bible and Christian Tradition clearly state that homosexual practices and sex outside marriage are sinful, and it would be wrong in a democratic society for the Government to compel religious bodies, institutions or individuals to act contrary to their beliefs.

4. (i) We are opposed to women in combat because women differ physically and psychologically from men. They do not have the muscular or physical strength of men, and their inclusion in combat squads would inevitably lead to a lowering of standards. Women are not allowed to box men in sport, so how can we allow them to fight enemy soldiers?

4. (ii) It would be an unusual injury, short of death, which affected a man's ability to be a father, but any abdominal injury could affect a woman's ability to bear a child. We should not expose young women to such risks to their child-bearing capacity.

4. (iii) Enclosed are some articles relating to women in combat. Although these articles are from the 1990s, the issues raised opposing women in combat are as valid now as they were then.

*Babette Francis*  
Mrs. Babette Francis  
National & Overseas Co-ordinator

24 July 2008

P.S. We would appreciate the opportunity of making a public submission at a public hearing