



October 24, 2017

For Immediate Release: Transphobia in Reporting about Grand Valley Prisoner

Women's Wellness Within is a non-profit organization that provides volunteer support to criminalized women and trans individuals who are pregnant or parenting young children. We advocate for access to housing, income, resources and health care. We are a collective of doulas, health care providers, lawyers, students, researchers and mentors. We have clearance to provide support at Nova Institution for Women Federal Prison, the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility Provincial Jail, and women on bail and parole in the community.

Our organization strongly objects to the lack of journalistic integrity evident in the October 24, 2017 National Post article by Christie Blatchford, <http://nationalpost.com/opinion/christie-blatchford-womens-prison-left-to-cope-after-getting-male-inmate-who-identifies-as-female>. Blatchford's use of language including "a fully functional male" and "the requisite male gear" displays her ignorance. It is obvious this article is meant as click-bait and to fuel hateful transphobic comments. We remind The National Post that gender is not genitalia and transwomen are women.

Blatchford reports a decision to reincarcerate a parolee after it was discovered they were wearing women's clothes and expressing identification as female. As Blatchford writes, for this, "She was deemed no longer manageable in the community." The criminalization of non-conforming gender expression is a direct violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. WWW supports non-carceral solutions for justice, and strongly objects to the gross criminalization of poverty, ill health, and social marginalization evident in the Canadian carceral systems.

Blatchford details that a CSC directive stipulates, "a male officer will conduct the strip search of the bottom half of [the] Offender... and the female staff will strip search the top half." Convuluted and invasive strip-searching methods are not the answer here. Decarceration is.

WWW offer our support to the women-identified individuals imprisoned at Grand Valley.

Contact: Martha Paynter, Chair of WWW, 9022927082 martha.paynter@gmail.com