

## "PREVO'S RIGHT, SORT OF"

By Ivan Moore an Anchorage pollster

I'm reading a book right now called I'm looking through you by Jennifer Finney Boylan, a very gifted writer who started life as a male. She describes her experience as a child coming to terms with her sexual identity with the following words:

"It's probably worth mentioning—just in case this still needs to be said—that the thing I felt didn't have much to do with being gay or lesbian; it was, even then, not about who I wanted to go to bed with, but who I wanted to go to bed as."

Her "gender identity," i.e. who she felt right as, had little to do with who she wanted to do the jiggy with, i.e. her sexual orientation. Go figure. So why are the two concepts being mixed together in the ordinance the Assembly is considering June 9? In case you haven't seen it, it reads as follows:

"Sexual orientation means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality or gender expression or identity. As used in this definition, 'gender expression or identity' means having or being perceived as having a self-image, appearance, or behavior different from that traditionally associated with the sex assigned to that person at birth."

Sexual orientation is a relatively recent term. Lately, it has supplanted "sexual preference" as the favored descriptor among clinicians and psychologists, and that change has been reflected in general usage, at least among more discerning and intelligent people. Dan Fagan continues to talk about sexual preference, but... whatever.

Sexual preference was considered non-ideal because it implied a choice where there's little evidence to suggest that one exists. Or that it doesn't. (The fact that it's obvious is irrelevant.) And secondly, it fell out of vogue because it confused the issues of orientation, i.e. who you are attracted to, with sexual identity and behavior, i.e. what you prefer to be and prefer to do.

Nearly all secular definitions of sexual orientation are very simple.

It's who you are sexually attracted to, and can be considered to be a straight line from homosexual to heterosexual, and all points in between.

It has nothing to do with your behavior... whether, for example, you like wearing women's panties or enjoy any of the 30 or so

"paraphilias" that Prevo has been at pains to draw our attention to. Telephone scatologia?

My, my...

By contrast, religious definitions of sexual orientation all intermingle the concepts of gender identity and sexual behaviors, all of them filthy nasty, for no other reason than because it's in their puritanical interests to do so.

The shockingly numbnuts move here was that the AKCLU and Pat Flynn and whoever else was responsible for crafting this ordinance played right into their bigoted hands by including gender identity and gender expression as "subsets" of sexual orientation.

Gender expression? I tell you, JERRY PREVO IS RIGHT! Some guy with a beard is going to get dolled up in a fearsomely attractive outfit and go hang out in the ladies bathroom in City Hall, looking for a lawsuit. Men aren't going to be lining up to troll the ladies bathroom looking to "prey on women and children" like the loopy right says they will, but the fact that the law could be made an example of in this way shows that it is bad public policy. I bet you someone does it, just to make a point.

On June 9, the Assembly should cut the words "or gender expression or identity" and the related language, and simplify the ordinance down to its real intent, to protect gays from being discriminated against. Gender expression and identity are simply not nice tidy subsets of sexual orientation, and so their placement as such is wrong. Personally, I think they should consider the inclusion of gender identity, but separately from orientation. Gender expression should be gotten rid of entirely, the mostly heterosexual crossdressers can just freaking do it in private, and the drag queens... well they don't care, they like the controversy anyway.

So old Jerry Prevo has a point. I think we're all served best in the end by considering what he says with some thoughtfulness, by looking through his bigotry and the often flat out un-Christian nature of what he says, and acknowledging that he has some valid concerns. Even if that's not what he deserves.

To Jennifer Finney Boylan, yes, it is worth mentioning, and unfortunately it still needs to be said. Thanks for saying it. I think I'll send your book to Mr. Prevo when I'm done with it.

Ivan Moore is an Anchorage pollster who was once discriminated against based on his citizenship. Citizenship, however, is not the same as national origin.