

Diet set to let parents change sex on registry

Kyodo News

A House of Councilors committee unanimously approved a bill Tuesday to enable people with gender identity disorder who are parents to change their officially registered sex, but for now their offspring must be adults.

Having no children has been a condition under the sex-change law enacted in July 2003 to enable people with gender identity disorder to alter their sex in their family registries.

The Judicial Affairs Committee voted in favor of the latest legislation without deliberation, as the committee chairman proposed.

The bill basically reflects a proposal made by the Liberal Democratic Party in April in response to demands from parents with the disorder wishing to change their registered sex.

The Democratic Party of Japan proposed that any parents with the disorder — regardless of whether their children have attained adulthood — be allowed to change their registered sex.

The LDP and DPJ, in a bid to iron out differences over the condition, agreed to attach a supplementary provision to the revised sex-change law, calling for the revised condition to be further reviewed if necessary.

The proposed legislation is expected to be enacted by June 15, the last day of this Diet session.

The relaxation of the "no-child" condition would give impetus for Japanese society to accept a biological male becoming "a mother" and a biological female

becoming "a father."

The 2003 law was enacted with the backing of the ruling and opposition camps to help remove the social obstacles that people with gender identity disorder encounter in daily life, including in employment, voting and overseas travel.

The law allows people to change their sex registration if at least two doctors have identified them as having a psychological makeup different than their biological sex and a desire to live as the opposite sex both physically and socially.

The current law says applicants must have no children, be 20 or older, unmarried, and have reproductive organs no longer functioning as a result of sex-change surgery.

The "no-child provision" was included after heeding concern from lawmakers that a change of sex on the part of people with children may cause family life disruptions.

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