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Hello,

I am an American from a very long line of Americans. My 8th great grandfather, Jurien Westfall, arrived in what is now upstate New York in the 1640s when it was still a Dutch colony called Fort Orange. He arrived here as an indentured servant, worked off his debt, married and had children and eventually passed away. My family has been here ever since, through the Civil War, both World Wars, through thick and thin, times prosperous and not. I am also related (distantly) to a former President, one Martin Van Buren. To say that I am American by heritage is perhaps an understatement. It is through this lens that I am writing this comment regarding issuing passports to Americans. Americans come in all shapes and sizes. It's part of what makes our country so great. American cultural exports come from people from all over the world, people who came to America because of that great American promise: Freedom. Freedom to be yourself, to express yourself, to make something of yourself in a way you see fit. Freedom to go to other countries and show the rest of the world how Americans are. This move to deny Americans their freedom to be themselves spits in the face of that promise. To deny a person the ability to have their government issued passports reflect their true selves is breaking that promise, a promise that so many have given the greatest sacrifice to defend. You don't have to agree with how people express themselves, but it is their right to do so in a manner befitting them, however they might see fit. I would like to continue being proud to belong to a family that has been in this great country for nearly 400 years now! I would like to continue having pride at my relation to one of our Presidents. But I cannot continue to have this pride if one of our fundamental promises is being broken. Not letting people have their passports reflect who they decide they are is breaking that promise.

Thank you.