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Hello!

I hope I'm commenting in the right location for this. The State Department recently changed guidelines about updating gender markers on existing passports in an attempt to follow a recent executive order issued by our new president. I understand concerns regarding wanting to properly identify individuals that travel across our borders, but I also think that policymakers should weigh the safety of transgender individuals who may be traveling in or out of the country and could face administrative difficulties, harassment, or even arrest when their marker doesn't match their presentation.

Oftentimes, when the public thinks about transgender people, they imagine a man in a wig and a dress masquerading as a woman to get a peep at someone in the bathroom. What the public doesn't think about are the transgender people who have spent years on hormones and/or acquiring gender affirming surgeries which have left them indistinguishable from other members of their gender. If these individuals have their birth sex outed through identification papers, they're being put at risk for the same violence we're seeking to protect women from.

There's no one-size-fits all solution to the concerns held by Americans across the political spectrum, but that doesn't mean there isn't any solution. Many institutions require documentation of medical gender dysphoria to update sex and gender markers, and something similar could be pursued here. Additionally, some countries, such as Germany, don't have sex or gender markers at all, and instead rely on photographic evidence and physical descriptors (height, weight, hair color, etc.). The answer won't be easy, but I believe in American ingenuity, and I believe that this administration has the capacity to find a solution to this issue that works for all people.

Despite historical struggles regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities, the United States has a proud history of compromise and fighting to represent ALL of its citizens, regardless of their beliefs and identity. If you can overturn this latest change in policy in favor of the safety of transgender Americans, that proud history will carry on and future citizens will look back on this decision in gratitude.