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I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed change to the U.S. passport renewal form that would replace the term “gender” with “sex” and require applicants to provide their biological sex at birth, as outlined in the Federal Register notice published on February 18, 2025. This proposed change is regressive, exclusionary, and harmful to transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals. It undermines the progress made toward recognizing and respecting the identities of all Americans.

1 Disregard for Gender Identity: Replacing “gender” with “sex” and requiring biological sex at birth ignores the lived experiences and identities of transgender and nonbinary individuals. Gender identity is a fundamental aspect of a person's identity, and forcing individuals to disclose their sex assigned at birth is invasive, disrespectful, and unnecessary. It perpetuates discrimination and erases the validity of diverse gender identities.

2 Privacy and Safety Concerns: Requiring individuals to disclose their sex assigned at birth poses significant privacy and safety risks. For many transgender and nonbinary people, this information is deeply personal and, if disclosed, could lead to harassment, discrimination, or even violence. Passport renewals should not force individuals to choose between their safety and their right to travel.

3 Contradiction with Existing Policies: This proposed change contradicts the Department of State's own progress in recognizing gender diversity. In 2021, the Department began offering a gender-neutral “X” marker on passports, a move that was widely celebrated as a step toward inclusivity. Reverting to a binary and biologically deterministic framework is a step backward and undermines the Department's commitment to equality.

4 International Travel Complications: Many countries recognize and respect gender diversity, and passports with gender markers that align with an individual's identity are essential for safe and seamless travel. Requiring individuals to use a passport that does not reflect their gender identity could lead to confusion, delays, or even denial of entry in some countries, creating unnecessary barriers for travelers.

5 Lack of Justification: The notice provides no compelling rationale for this change. There is no evidence that replacing “gender” with “sex” or requiring biological sex at birth improves the passport renewal process or enhances national security. This change appears to be driven by ideology rather than practicality, and it fails to consider the needs and rights of all Americans.

6 Impact on Intersex Individuals: Intersex people, who are born with variations in sex characteristics, are also harmed by this proposal. Requiring a binary designation of “male” or “female” based on biological sex at birth fails to acknowledge the diversity of human biology and further marginalizes intersex individuals.

In conclusion, I urge the Department of State to abandon this proposed change and maintain the current inclusive approach to gender markers on passport renewal applications. The Department should continue to respect and affirm the identities of all individuals, including transgender, nonbinary, and intersex Americans. Any changes to the passport renewal process should prioritize inclusivity, privacy, and safety, not undermine them.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Ramsey