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I am writing to express my strong opposition to recent policy changes regarding gender markers on U.S. passports, which adversely impact transgender, intersex, and non-binary individuals. These changes represent a regressive step backward in recognizing and respecting the rights of all Americans and undermine our country's founding principles of equality and dignity that should guide U.S. government policies.

Harmful Policy Changes

Recent amendments to passport policies have included:

Reversal or restriction of "X" gender markers, limiting recognition and legal documentation for non-binary individuals.
Reinstating medical or legal documentation requirements for gender changes, imposing unnecessary and burdensome barriers for transgender and intersex applicants.
Increased scrutiny and delays in processing gender marker changes, disproportionately affecting transgender and intersex individuals.

Unwarranted Government Intrusion

These changes constitute an unnecessary—and potentially unconstitutional—government overreach into the lives of U.S. citizens. The Supreme Court has consistently recognized protections for transgender individuals under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (*Bostock v. Clayton County*, 2020). Restricting gender marker options or requiring medical proof disregards the scientific, medical, and psychological consensus that gender identity is deeply personal and self-determined.

The American Medical Association (AMA) and American Psychological Association (APA) recognize that gender identity is not solely determined by biological sex and that individuals should have the autonomy to self-identify. Requiring medical or legal verification contradicts best practices established by these organizations and creates unnecessary hardship.

Increased Risks and Discrimination

A fundamental role of government is to protect its citizens, yet these policy changes increase the risk of discrimination, harassment, and denial of services—particularly for travelers. Studies have shown that transgender and non-binary individuals already face heightened scrutiny, delays, and mistreatment when presenting identification that does not align with their gender identity (James et al., 2016, National Center for Transgender Equality). Forcing inaccurate or outdated gender markers on passports increases vulnerability to such discrimination.

Contradiction of U.S. Commitments to Human Rights

The U.S. has historically positioned itself as a global leader in LGBTQ+ rights. These regressive passport policies contradict that stance, sending a damaging message both domestically and abroad. Many countries—including Canada, Australia, Germany, and New Zealand—have implemented inclusive gender marker policies without issue, demonstrating that such policies are feasible, beneficial, and aligned with international human rights standards.

Policy Recommendations

I urge the administration to reinstate policies that respect the rights of all Americans, including transgender, intersex, and non-binary individuals. Specifically, the government should:

1. Restore the option for an "X" gender marker without requiring additional documentation.
2. Maintain self-attestation policies for gender markers without imposing medical or legal verification.
3. Commit to policies that uphold dignity, privacy, and safety for all American citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I strongly urge you to reverse these harmful changes.