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If the purpose of a passport is to certify a person's identity and nationality, then the sex written on their birth certificate is not a necessary piece of information for adults. Requiring individuals to list their biological sex at birth on their passport renewal applications, and limiting this only to 'male' or 'female', jeopardizes American travelers and ignores the biological realities of intersex people, as well as those with other health issues.

As a proof of identity, a passport should reflect the person as they are currently rather than what they were understood to be as an infant. To do otherwise endangers travelers and limits opportunities for Americans. Further, it does nothing so far as actual identification is concerned. If a person's appearance is radically different from their stated sex, it surely casts doubt on the passport as a legitimate document of identification. And if a person cannot change that part of their identification document, it makes that document less useful to the traveler and to other countries because it does not accurately reflect current reality. None of this makes Americans abroad safer.

A passport should be the same tool, and hold the same value, for every single American. So if even one American did not fit into either a male or female category, I would still advocate for more than those two options. This is not the case. Even if we ignore people who transition from one gender to another, or who decide they have no gender, and stick strictly to a chromosomal or 'biological' understanding of sex, we could not ignore intersex people. At the most conservative estimate there are tens of thousands of intersex Americans who, if this change is made, cannot truthfully mark their biological sex and apply for a passport renewal. That is unacceptable and it is unnecessary.

Fundamentally, this proposed change would make the American passport a less accurate certificate of identification. It is unnecessary, and unhelpful. I sincerely hope whatever the final resolution is, it is more flexible than this proposed change. Thank you for reading.