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My partner and I are both transgender U.S. citizens. We are not criminals, we are model citizens. We're highly-educated, we're working professionals, we're church-goers, and we're active members of our local community.

My partner and I only want to be left alone, to live our lives in peace. We are entitled to the same "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" as all other Americans.

Unfortunately, the proposed changes to fully replace gender identity with sex on passports will have profound negative consequences for us:

First, what seems like a small change to our passports will actually force us to risk our lives every time we have to present the document. In the U.S., we do not condone violence, even against people we disagree with. But, this is not the case worldwide. If my passport says male and I look female, I am at risk of harassment, violence, and other harms. If my passport clearly indicates that I am transgender, I will never be able to simply go about my life in the same way as everyone else.

Second, the proposed changes do not align with reality. For categories to be binary, means that there are exactly two options. No more, no less, and no exceptions. Yet, while the proposed changes conceptualizes human sex as binary, the human sexes are actually bimodal. Scientifically, one's sex is determined by a compilation of characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, primary sex characteristics, and secondary sex characteristics. While most people fit neatly into the binary, nature has no regard for our man-made categories. The result is that a wide variety of intersex people exist, have always existed, and will always exist. Intersex people are exceptions, and the binary inherently cannot account for these exceptions.

Third, these proposed changes will negatively affect non-transgender people as well. Prohibiting or restricting changes to the category of sex will make it difficult or impossible for non-transgender individuals to correct genuine errors. Mistakes happen, even on important documents like birth certificates. There must be a method to fix these mistakes.

Fourth, a person's sex is not helpful in identification, even though identification is the primary purpose of a passport. Especially for transgender people, our sex will tell you absolutely nothing about the way we look. The proposed changes only introduce new potential confusion into what should be trustworthy documents.

Fifth, the primary justification for the Executive Order, and these proposed changes, is cruelty. Proponents may state other reasons, but these are entirely pretextual. I know this because my family and I have increasingly been the targets of this bigotry and vitriol; The more that cruelty and hatred has become acceptable, the more cruelty and hatred we have experienced. Official government actions must not be used to fan the flames.

For these reasons stated above, I strongly oppose the proposed changes and I pray that they are reconsidered.