

Author Full Name : R Eric Reuss**Received Date :** 02/21/2025 05:48 PM**Comments Received :**

The proposed change of "gender" to "sex at birth" and only allowing M/F options has a number of problems and should not be enacted.

It runs directly counter to the purpose of a passport as identification. If someone was born with male genitals, but currently looks like a woman - possibly having had surgery or hormone therapy to that effect - a passport stating "M" will be actively misleading. A travel official examining a passport cannot look back in time at a traveler's birth genitals, only at the clothed traveler in front of them. Mismatches between documentation and presentation will waste time for those checking IDs and make their jobs more difficult. It will make **everyone** spend more time in line.

Less broadly but much more significantly, it is quite hostile to US citizens whose sex at birth does not match the place they have found in society. Travel will become miserable for such people, a constant fraught gauntlet of officials who might choose to nitpick, heckle, or deny - and that's before considering the very real possibility that someone's birth gender is a source of psychological trauma for them. (I have multiple friends for whom this is true.) "Hostile" is not an exaggeration; this change is even likely to threaten the lives of US citizens traveling overseas by revealing that they are transgender.

Impact-wise, I will be unable to take trips with or be visited by my trans and nonbinary friends who decide that air travel is too risky and/or demeaning. It will make it harder / more fraught for those friends to fly to see family, to go to out-of-state professional development opportunities, to seek new places to live, or any other activity for which one might wish to travel.

Finally, there are intersex people for whom neither M nor F is correct in describing "sex at birth". A system which does not account for them is incomplete. My understanding is that there are court rulings to this effect, and that the likely impact of a policy which does not permit options other than M and F is an expensive, money-wasting lawsuit. Our society and our government have many better things to spend our funds on.

To sum up: the proposed changes around gender are grounded in antiquated and incorrect beliefs about the very real and complex ways humans experience sex and gender. They will result in a system that - in addition to the above harms - is antiquated and incorrect. Please don't adopt them.

Thank you for your time,
R. Eric Reuss