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The change on Form DS-5504 to include only two gender (sex) markers (Male or Female) within the passport processing systems does not make sense in the 21st century for the reasons I state below. Science has shown that a simplistic view of only two genders does not match up with reality. To reduce the options to these two markers just increases the complexity of those trying to deal with and live in that gray zone of non-binary existence.

The traditional view of gender has long been binary, categorizing individuals strictly as male or female. However, advances in biology and a deeper understanding of human development reveal a far more complex and nuanced reality. Human biology is not strictly binary but spans across a spectrum, reflecting the diverse and intricate nature of our species.

Human development begins at conception with the combination of sex chromosomes: XX typically resulting in a female and XY in a male. However, this binary classification fails to encompass the full range of biological variations. Intersex conditions, for example, illustrate the diversity of human anatomy beyond the binary framework. Intersex individuals may have atypical chromosomal, gonadal, or anatomical sex characteristics that do not fit typical definitions of male or female.

Chromosomal variations such as Klinefelter syndrome (XXY), Turner syndrome (XO), and Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) challenge the binary understanding of gender. These conditions can result in a variety of physical and physiological traits, including differences in reproductive anatomy and secondary sexual characteristics.

Hormones play a crucial role in the development of sexual characteristics. Variations in hormone levels and responses can lead to diverse gender expressions. For example, Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH) can cause individuals with XX chromosomes to develop ambiguous genitalia, while AIS can result in individuals with XY chromosomes developing female physical traits.

The development of internal and external genitalia during fetal growth is a complex process influenced by genetic and environmental factors. There are instances where an otherwise male body does not descend testicles, leading to ambiguous genitalia that may require surgical intervention. These variations highlight the spectrum of human anatomy and the limitations of a binary classification system.

Beyond biological factors, gender identity is also shaped by social, cultural, and psychological influences. Many individuals do not identify strictly as male or female. These identities reflect a personal understanding of gender that transcends traditional categories.

Human biology and gender are inherently complex and diverse, extending beyond a simple binary framework. Recognizing and embracing this diversity allows for a more accurate and inclusive understanding of human identity. By acknowledging the spectrum of human biology and gender, we can foster a society that respects and celebrates the rich tapestry of human existence.

With all due respect, I request the proposed changes to this regulation not be made.