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If the purpose of a U.S. Passport is to permit lawful citizens to travel to other countries and have access to lawful local aid and protection while abroad, it makes the most sense from a safety standpoint for the documentation to match what the passport holder currently appears as. This is why it is so important for the photo to accurately match what the passport holder looks like. In changing the wording of the passport application to align with a narrow view of sex as “applicant’s biological sex at birth,” it opens up many individuals to an extra level of scrutiny if how the individual presents themselves does not match what is listed on the document. It also opens up the possibility of the document being considered fraudulent if whatever domestic or foreign official reviewing the passport decides that the sex marker on the ID does not match the individual’s appearance.

Following the president’s executive order on “assigned sex at birth” markers also forces transgender and intersex individuals to have mismatched documentation, as many have changed their state birth certificates and driver’s licenses to more accurately match their presentation. All around, these changes interfere with the primary function of these documents as accurate legal identification of an individual in order to force an idea that there is an unchangeable, strict, binary for sex that all humans neatly fit into instead of the more complicated truth that it isn’t so black and white.