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Intersex people make up an estimated 1% of the population, or over 5 million U.S. citizens. They are born neither biologically male or female. (Source: How common is intersex? <https://isna.org/faq/frequency/>)

Over 15 countries allow citizens to mark a non-binary or third gender on their passports, including: Australia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, and India. (Source: Katherine Fung, 2021 <https://www.newsweek.com/which-countries-recognize-third-gender-option-passports-1643167>)

It is important our official documents also recognize this scientific reality, and contain the option of “X” in addition to M and F on passports.

As a professor of Biomedical Ethics, I am familiar with the history: Before 1993, few people knew about intersex, in part because doctors rarely told families when their baby was born noticeably intersex. Instead, many doctors opted for cosmetic surgical changes, which they told parents were “medically necessary.” Moreover, some visible indications of being intersex don’t appear until puberty or later. Many intersex individuals have limited access to information, and long thought they were alone or unique.

According to the Intersex Society of North America: “People who are intersex will tell you that the primary thing they’ve been harmed by is induced shame about their intersex. The best way to reduce shame (and thereby reduce harm to individuals and families coping with intersex) is to talk openly and honestly about intersex.” (https://isna.org/faq/end_secretcy/)

Allowing people to identify their intersex truthfully and accurately on official passports is inline with science. It also reduces stigma and harm, and supports the well-being of over 5 million Americans.

Thanks for your consideration of this important matter.

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