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This comment urges the State Department to refrain from amendments to the passport biographical information form related to “an applicant’s biological sex at birth, male ‘M’ or female ‘F.’”

The identification information provided within a passport includes the traveler’s legal name, date of birth, and state of residence, as well as a unique passport number – all of which are sufficient for identifying a traveler. The incorporation of the individual’s gender or sex does not add significant differentiation.

Similarly, this process steps on the toes of states that have already enacted Real ID issuance and have established their own processes for changing gender markers, many of which involve physician verification and court orders. If an individual has already met the requirements of their state, why would the State Department invalidate that? It honestly seems that these changes serve no practical purpose and are a waste of taxpayer money.

E.O. 14168 indicates a desire to return to the fallacy of a binary male and female. It does not reflect any real scientific understanding of genetics, chromosomes, and internal sense of gender, nor does it align with the professional practice and ethical standards of multiple well-respected and scientifically-informed organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, and the National Association of Social Workers. These evidence-based practitioners are in unanimous agreement about the scientific and psychological basis of intersex and transgender identities. This also allows for the spectrum of indigenous identities, specifically gender which includes two spirits, among others. They have concluded that transgender identities are real and that denying the existence of trans- or expansive gender identity is life-threatening to such individuals. To this point, labeling sex as limited to male and female excludes individual Americans who do not identify with the gender binary and whose sex cannot be categorized specifically according to their biological or genetic reality (e.g., intersex, sterile, or those who have transitioned through medical assistance).

The President holds no intellectual, executive or professional authority to override standards established by practitioners to declare gender as no different than sex. Furthermore, he holds no authority over the English language to declare the two words interchangeable. This is a dangerous proposal that will expose many Americans, including those assigned female at birth, to potential inappropriate screenings, possible assault, and slower and more invasive security lines.

I have close personal relationships with several transgender individuals, as well as several cisgender women who do not express themselves in a traditionally feminine way. These are people who would be negatively impacted by these changes when they have done no wrong. Their identities are only their own to worry about, and they pose no inherent threat to anyone.