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I have been living peacefully as a man for 6 years. My vital records list me as male because our society has long agreed that people occasionally transition genders, and it is common sense for someone living their life as a man to be considered so legally. I have a beard. I have male-pattern baldness. I have had surgery. I look and function in the world like an entirely ordinary middle-aged man. It would be nonsensical for my passport to say "female." Since 1977, the federal government has acknowledged this reality; in that year, the Model State Vital Statistics Act introduced guidelines for citizens to change their sex on vital records. Only since the recent politically-motivated scapegoating of transgender Americans has this process become controversial. The proposed policies to eliminate this relief represent a radical departure from the nearly half-century-old tradition of allowing us to quietly update our records so that we may go about our lives in peace.

The purpose of a passport is to provide a means for citizens to verify their identity and citizenship to allow them to travel freely and safely. Forcing a mismatched document onto certain disfavored Americans is at cross-purposes to this aim. The proposed policy introduces, rather than reduces, confusion. The obvious conflict between my person and my passport would create pointless bureaucratic distraction and delay when presenting for travel. Furthermore, I would be forced to disclose my personal and medical history any time I needed to board an airplane or train, rent a car, secure lodging, or many other small interactions during routine travel that most people take for granted. Every time I have to out myself, I would be exposed to harassment and discrimination, and certain countries would become unsafe for me to travel to at all.

In exchange, this policy produces no benefit to any other citizen, or to society more broadly. The only effect is to harm transgender Americans. Such animus is not a legitimate government interest.