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DS-5504

As I have commented on similar proposed changes to passport renewals and passport applications, these changes are unnecessary to the proper functioning of the State Department. Why take an already effective and time-consuming process and make expensive, wasteful changes?

Intersex people or people with differences of sex development (DSD) would have no accurate option to indicate their sex; this could affect up to 2% of the US population, which, to use a common comparison, is more than the number of redheads in the US. For those who find out about intersex conditions later in life, this will cause additional difficulties in obtaining a passport, and could require them to expose an often stigmatized medical condition unnecessarily. Using the term gender is more compatible with the way people live their life. What about people who were forced to undergo genital correction surgery as children and then developed different sex characteristics as a result of puberty?

Additionally, the application requirement to state that one has not been required to register as a sex offender is unnecessary and is statistically more likely to affect LGBTQ+ people. Research into registered sex offenders has shown that some were charged with things as simple as not disclosing HIV status despite not transmitting the disease. In some states, lewd bumper stickers were cause to be put on the registry. Given the uneven application of charges (no regulation, punitive, can be trivial or very severe offenses), the severe barriers people already face (unable to find secure housing, denied jobs and unable to access medical care, threatened with violence or experiencing violence), it is unnecessary to require this information to renew a passport application.