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The proposed revisions to The Application for a U.S. Passport (form DS-11) would violate the medical privacy of U.S. citizens, call the legal identity of millions of Americans into question, and make the process of getting a passport inefficient and overcomplicated. I urge you to reject this policy change.

Since the addition of sex or gender markers in passports -- as recently as 1977 -- U.S. policy has always allowed individuals to obtain a passport with a sex designation that differed from their original birth certificate. There is no reason to put an end to this long history of recognition for transgender and intersex individuals by the Department of State. U.S. citizens must have access to documentation that accurately and consistently reflects who they are, and how they are perceived by relevant authorities. Forcing people to adopt a sex marker that is incompatible with their name, presentation, or state-level documentation will lead to confusion and delays at border checkpoints. Americans traveling abroad may be questioned, detained, or denied entry to countries that see a person's appearance and sex marker as incongruous.

And, for individuals who choose to use their passport as proof of citizenship, this policy change would make it more difficult to open a bank account, start a new job, get married, enroll in school, rent a home, or any number of everyday essentials.

It's not only transgender and intersex people who will be unfairly burdened by the new policy. Any U.S. citizen who has had an administrative error in their birth certificate or other documentation would face unnecessary difficulty acquiring documentation. U.S. citizens who don't conform to traditional stereotypes of masculinity or femininity risk being pressed for extra documentation or unfairly profiled when applying for a passport. Meanwhile, Department of State employees will waste valuable time and resources tracking down the private medical history of passport applicants in an attempt to 'prove' an applicant's sex assigned at birth.

Furthermore, this policy is not standardized. It impacts applicants differently depending on their state of birth. A transgender or intersex citizen born in Maine -- where administrative changes to birth certificates are allowed and sealed from the records -- would be able to get an accurate passport. The same person, if born in Louisiana -- where changes to birth certificates are severely limited -- would not be able to obtain a passport which accurately identifies them.

It's shameful to see that our government has invested this much time, resources, energy, and rhetoric into a single letter on our identification documents. It's absurd to pretend that an M, F, or even X provides the most important piece of information border officials need to confirm a traveler's identity. It's even more absurd to pretend that this change is made in the name of truth or accuracy. If enacted, this policy change will limit the rights of millions of Americans to safely go about their daily lives.

I am one of those millions. Without an accurate passport, I would be unable to travel abroad, my job security would be in doubt, and I would possess no proof of my citizenship that aligned with my legally recognized name and gender.

Even if I weren't impacted, I care about my family, friends, and neighbors who are. I ask you all to reconsider this thoughtless and unnecessary change to State Department policy. Thank you.