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The Notice of Request for Public Comments regarding proposed changes to Form DS-5504 indicates that a passport's biographical data page will be changed to replace the term "gender" with the term "sex" and to require that the passport applicant indicates their biological sex at birth (as opposed to the gender by which the applicant is presently identifying) using the nomenclature "M" for male or "F" for female with no opportunity to indicate the applicant's preference to use "X" as a non-binary gender marker, as has been the case in the past.

I am opposed to this change as there are compelling reasons why an applicant might not want to disclose their sex at birth on their U.S. passport when traveling abroad:

A. Safety concerns

In many countries, transgender individuals face discrimination, harassment, and even violence. A passport that does not accurately reflect their gender presentation could expose them to these dangers. Having a passport that displays an individual's sex at birth that differs from their current gender presentation can lead to increased scrutiny and potential harassment from border officials.

B. Privacy and dignity

Forcing a transgender person to disclose their sex at birth violates their right to privacy and can be deeply distressing. It can create a sense of invalidation and disrespect for their current gender identity.

C. Potential for discrimination

Some countries have laws and policies that discriminate against transgender people. A passport that reveals their sex at birth could lead to denial of entry, detention, or other forms of discrimination.

D. Accurate representation

A passport is an identification document. It should accurately reflect a person's current gender identity.

It's important to recognize that having a passport that accurately reflects a person's gender identity is a matter of safety, dignity, and basic human rights. It is the duty of the U.S. Department of State to ensure that all of its citizens are afforded these intrinsic privileges when endeavoring to travel abroad.