

Intersex People Oppose Trump Administration's Narrow Sex and Gender Definition Proposals

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“Intersex people have historically been erased by unnecessary shame, stigma and non-consensual medical intervention. Increasingly we’re speaking out and fighting back, and today louder than ever and in solidarity with our trans and gender non-conforming peers.”

—*Kimberly Zieselman (she/her), Executive Director, [interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth](#)*

“Any quest to define a bodily ‘marker’ to categorize and control marginalized sex, gender, and sexuality identities is not only false science, but fundamentally dangerous. The Administration’s proposed sex and gender definitions erase intersex people, too. We are here to resist alongside our trans and gender non-conforming family.”

—*Hans Lindahl (she/they), Communications Director, [interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth](#)*

“This administration’s stance regarding discontinuation of gender marker changes is violence against transgender and intersex communities. The administration’s inflexibility could create a situation in which intersex and trans people that have been wrongfully assigned to a gender due to false perceptions of science cannot access passports, state IDs, and travel, in addition to the various forms of violence already existing against these groups.”

—*Robyn Foley (they/them), interACT Youth member, intersex and transgender advocate*

What is intersex, as it relates to these proposed definitions?

- Intersex people—who compose up to 1.7% of the population—are born with sex characteristics that don't line up with what society tends to think of as a typical “male” or “female” body.
- These differences are a part of the fabric of our human diversity and have existed throughout time.
- There are many ways to be intersex. For example, some intersex people are born with XY chromosomes, internal testes, a vagina and vulva. Some are born with XX chromosomes, ovaries, and genitalia that does not match “typical” male or female appearance. There are many different genital, gonadal, hormonal, and chromosomal combinations. Some intersex people have chromosomes that are neither XX nor XY.
- Intersex people, like everyone, can have any sexuality and gender identity.
- While they are distinct identities, many people are both intersex and transgender.
- Intersex people face discrimination, especially in the form of surgical and hormonal interventions aimed at “correcting” their diverse sex traits. An incorrect federal definition of sex and gender as binary will exacerbate the violence and erasure intersex people already face.

Why does this proposal hurt intersex people?

- This is an attack on our realities, as well as those of trans and gender nonconforming people. The administration's attempt to roll back recognition and protections would have a devastating impact on intersex people.
- Genitals do not determine gender. Intersex people are born with all kinds of genitalia, and our anatomy often does not line up with typical definitions. Even still today, doctors may attempt to “guess” our future gender identities, performing irreversible surgeries to assign corresponding sex traits to infants and young children.
- Nonconsensual intersex surgeries are disastrous and have been condemned by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the World Health Organization, several United Nations entities, and three former U.S. Surgeons General, in addition to every intersex-led organization. Not only are there terrible physical outcomes of the surgeries, the guesses at gender are often wrong, and we live with the consequences.
- Chromosomes do not determine gender. The administration proposes that any dispute about one's sex would be clarified using genetic testing, which would likely mean chromosomal testing. Intersex people often have chromosomes that do not line up in an expected way with their external sex organs, and can have chromosomal patterns that are not XX or XY. Intersex and transgender people know that chromosomes are a piece of trivia and a remnant from fetal development, not any meaningful predictor of gender identity. Any quest to find a bodily

'marker' of a marginalized sex, gender, or sexuality identity is not only false science, but fundamentally dangerous.

- The negative impact of this potential new regulation would be felt by intersex people across the nation. We already suffer the potential for involuntary surgery at infancy to erase our healthy differences. Groups like interACT fight against such interventions, which are not explicitly prohibited despite being condemned by every single intersex-led organization. The proposed changes would put vulnerable intersex children at an even higher risk in institutional settings like hospitals and schools.
- With this regulation, intersex people would, like our trans family, be compromised in accessing all forms of public spaces.

Intersex people are here to show solidarity with our trans and gender non-conforming family. This is an attack on all of us, a continuation of centuries of violence against difference, and we will not rest until we have won.