

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Critical Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Dear Students, Staff and Faculty,

Recently the New York Times reported on a leaked memo out of the office of Health and Human Services identifying a potential change in policy with regard to how the notion of “gender” is understood by the federal government. Since then, there has been a dramatic response in the form of political protests, conversations via social media, and hopefully plenty of shared support amongst all those affected by this news.

We understand that this news is dispiriting and scary. This is not the first attack on the rights of LGBTQI folks over the last several years, but it is the most damaging proposed policy yet that targets trans and gender non-conforming individuals. For those of us committed to equity, justice and diversity, these are difficult times.

If adopted, the proposed change would (for federal purposes), collapse the notion of “gender” into one of two binary sex categories (male and female) as determined at birth, thereby rendering invisible intersex, trans and gender non-conforming people. In other words, one’s assignment at birth is seen as the final word on one’s identity. This is why the word “erasure” was used by the New York Times in their original article (See: [New York Times article](#)). Basically, the proposed new federal definition of gender, if adopted, would limit the ability of trans and gender non-conforming people to hold institutions accountable for anti-trans discrimination. As such, it represents a rejection of the stance of the Obama administration which recognized that trans and gender non-conforming persons were covered under Title IX and other civil rights legislation to protect people from gender-based discrimination, harassment and retaliation. This proposed change is on the federal level and if adopted, would end up affecting those who have significant encounters with the federal government including immigrants, prisoners, and federal employees, and it would impact federal programs in health care and education. The full extent of this anti transgender agenda is still unfolding. There will be a public comment period on the proposed changes, and you will have the opportunity to make your voice heard. Organizations such as the [National Center for Transgender Equality](#), and the California based [Transgender Law Center](#) will be providing updates on the political situation.

Even if this policy were adopted, there is no evidence that those in our community who have had gender markers changed on identification documents will need to turn those in to be re-issued with gender designations assigned at birth. If you were planning on changing these kinds of designators, you still can and California in particular is committed to protecting this right.

Since this proposed change is on the federal level, it is important to know that California State legislation still protects LGBTQI people. Here in California, the CSU, and our own university recognize the legitimacy of trans, non-binary gender identities and physicalities, and a diversity of gender expressions. The federal government can’t change California law

and the State of California has already shown itself to be a leader in resisting federal policies which go against the values and principles of social justice and environmental sustainability.

Our community also has options for support.

On Campus:

Counseling and Psychological Services has a trans support group, as well as individual counseling appointments, call CAPS at 826-3626 for more information.

Eric Rofes Multicultural Queer Resource Center The ERC's mission is to shift public opinion of the queer community on campus and in the local area from tolerance to acceptance and to serve as a hub for students to learn about events and organizations on campus. Contact: (707) 826-3795 or email erc.humboldt.edu

Off campus:

Trans Lifeline's hotline (877-565-8860) is a peer support service run by trans people, for trans and questioning callers.

Texting crisis support (741741), while not specifically for trans and gender non-conforming support, this crisis text line is answered by counselors who can provide support and access to resources.