



March 9, 2017

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

On Wednesday February 22, your administration revoked a set of federal guidelines specifying that transgender students be permitted to use the school restrooms and other sex-segregated school facilities consistent with their gender identities. The American Sociological Association is writing to express our support for administrative policies on sex segregation that treat transgender students as members of their professed gender for all school-sponsored activities. Studies of the social and emotional adjustment of transgender and gender nonconforming students consistently demonstrate that access to appropriate school facilities is essential for fostering psychological health and educational success. Further, we have been unable to locate any incidents of harm against cisgender (non-transgender) students resulting from the implementation of trans-inclusive school policies. Therefore, we conclude that the revocation of the federal guidelines are contrary to all available social science evidence and are likely to cause harm to transgender and gender nonconforming students.

Transgender and gender nonconforming students prevented from accessing appropriate sex-segregated facilities suffer grave educational and psychological consequences.

A recent survey of over 27,000 transgender adults revealed that restroom access is a major health issue; 59% of survey respondents reported avoiding bathrooms during the past year for fear of harassment.ⁱ Some 39% avoided eating or drinking when outside their homes, to minimize the need to use public restrooms.ⁱⁱ Eight percent reported that these behaviors led to urinary tract or kidney infections.ⁱⁱⁱ Bathroom avoidance also contributes to elevated levels of truancy among transgender youth. The National School Climate Survey reported that 32% of LGBTQ students felt so unsafe that they skipped at least one day of school in the previous month.^{iv} More than a third reported feeling particularly unsafe in restrooms and locker rooms.^v Transgender students who felt unsafe at school were also more likely to report a prior suicide attempt.^{vi}

Transgender and gender nonconforming students permitted to use appropriate sex-segregated facilities exhibit improved mental and physical health.

Multiple clinical and epidemiological studies confirm that allowing transgender people to make social transitions in childhood, including but not limited to allowing them to present as their affirmed gender in school improves their mental health.^{vii} Further, familial acceptance for transgender people is likewise correlated with positive physical and mental health outcomes, and lower likelihood of depression, suicidality and substance abuse;^{viii} however, that correlation is weaker for transgender students than it is for lesbian and gay students absent concrete institutional supports.^{ix} Students in schools with trans-positive student groups, such as Queer-Straight Alliance (QSA) groups and affirmative administrative policies displayed markedly better mental and physical health^x and have stronger educational attainment outcomes.^{xi}

There have been no reported incidents of harassment or violence directed at cisgender individuals in bathrooms by either transgender or gender nonconforming people.

Though it is difficult to capture data on the absence of incidents, several news outlets have confirmed no existing reports of violence in restrooms perpetrated by transgender or gender nonconforming people,^{xii} even when specifically examining places where protections for transgender bathroom access exist.^{xiii} Sponsors of so-called “bathroom bills—pieces of legislation preventing bathroom access for transgender people—have described such legislative efforts as “preventative,” and not based on actual occurrences of violence.^{xiv} In fact, it is far more common for transgender and gender nonconforming people to report being victims of violence when instructed to use bathrooms that are not consistent with their identities.^{xv}

For the reasons stated above, the American Sociological Association recommends the immediate re-implementation of the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education “Dear Colleagues” letter dated May 16, 2016.

Sincerely,



Michèle Lamont, President
American Sociological Association

ⁱ James, S.E., Herman, J.L. Rankin, S. Keisling, M. Mottet, L. Anafi, M. 2016. *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington D.C. The National Center for Transgender Equality. <http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS%20Full%20Report%20-%20FINAL%201.6.17.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Id.

ⁱⁱⁱ Id.

^{iv} Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Giga, N. M., Villenas, C. & Danischewski, D. J. (2016). *The 2015 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN.

^v Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Giga, N. M., Villenas, C. & Danischewski, D. J. (2016). *The 2015 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN.

^{vi} Haas, Ann P., Phillip L. Rogers, and Jody Herman. 2014. *Suicide Attempts among Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Adults*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute.

^{vii} Olson, Kristina R., Lily Durwood, Madeleine DeMeules and Katie A. McLaughlin. 2016. Mental Health of Transgender Children who are Supported in their Mental Health. *Pediatrics* 137 (3).

^{viii} Simons Lisa, Sheree M. Schrage, Leslie F. Clark, Marvin Belzer, Johanna Olson. 2013. “Parental support and mental health among transgender adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53(6):791–793

^{ix} Ryan, Caitlin, Stephen T. Russell, David Huebner, Rafael Diaz, and Jorge Sanchez. 2010. “Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults.” *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 23(4):205-13; Kuvalanka, Katherine A., Judith L. Weiner, Derek Mahan. 2014. “Child, family, and community transformations: findings from interviews with mothers of transgender girls.” *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 10(4):354–379.

^x Heck, Nicholas C., Annesa Flentje, & Cochran, B. N. 2011. Offsetting risks: High school gay-straight alliances and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 26(2): 161-174.

^{xi} Greytak, Emily A., Joseph G. Kosciw, and Madelyn L. Boesen. 2013. “Putting the ‘T’ in Resource’: The Benefits of LGBT-Related School Resources for Transgender Youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth* 10: 45-63.

^{xii} Brydum, Sunnivie. 2015. “Texas Doubles Down Transphobic Legislation, Adding \$2,000 fine for ‘Wrong’ Bathroom Use.” *The Advocate*, March 10: <http://www.advocate.com/politics/transgender/2015/03/10/texas-doubles-down-transphobic-legislation-adding-2000-fine-wrong-ba>; Maza, Carlos. 2014. “Debunking the Big Myth about Transgender-Inclusive Bathrooms.” *Media Matters*, March 20th: <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2014/03/20/debunking-the-big-myth-about-transgender-inclus/198530>.

^{xiii} See e.g. Percelay, Rachel. 2015. “Seventeen School Districts Debunk Right-Wing Lies about Protections for Transgender Students.” *Media Matters*, June 3rd: <http://mediamatters.org/research/2015/06/03/17-school-districts-debunk-right-wing-lies-about/203867>.

^{xiv} See e.g. Florida State Representative Frank Arlies’ statement on his own blog, characterizing the bill he introduced (HB 538) as “precautionary.” Artilles, Frank. February 23, 2015: <http://frankartiles.com/hb-583-single-sex-public-facilities/>.

^{xv} Herman, Jody L. 2013. “Gendered Restrooms and Minority Stress: The Public Regulation of gender and its Impact on Transgender People’s Lives.” The Williams Institute. *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy*. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Herman-Gendered-Restrooms-and-Minority-Stress-June-2013.pdf>.