

Executive Orders Affecting Transgender Persons

What are the Executive Orders and what do they say?

“Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions”

Initial rescissions of Executive Orders and Actions issued by President Biden.

Among these orders are several that addressed LGBTQ+ equity including “Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation” (Executive Order 13988) and “Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals” (Executive Order 14075). The order establishing the White House Gender Policy Council (Executive Order 14020) and several Orders related to diversity, equity, and inclusion were also rescinded, as were orders related to nondiscrimination and equity in schools.

EO 14168: “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government”

Directs the federal government to recognize only two immutable sexes — male and female — determined at conception, and directs federal agencies to end funding to “promote gender ideology” —

(Sec. 2(f): “Gender ideology” replaces the biological category of sex with an ever-shifting concept of self-assessed gender identity, permitting the false claim that males can identify as and thus become women and vice versa, and requiring all institutions of society to regard this false claim as true. Gender ideology includes the idea that there is a vast spectrum of genders that are disconnected from one’s sex. Gender ideology is internally inconsistent, in that it diminishes sex as an identifiable or useful category but nevertheless maintains that it is possible for a person to be born in the wrong sexed body. Sec. 2(g) “Gender identity” reflects a fully internal and subjective sense of self, disconnected from biological reality and sex and existing on an infinite continuum, that does not provide a meaningful basis for identification and cannot be recognized as a replacement for sex.)

— prompting grant terminations at agencies including the departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development, among others.

The order directs the attorney general to reinterpret civil rights protections. It bars transgender individuals from federally funded, single-sex facilities that align with their gender identity — including women’s shelters and prisons. The order also affects all federal identification documents, including passports and personnel records. Additionally, it directs agencies to remove statements “promoting gender ideology,” which, for example, prompted agencies to remove guidance related to gender identity from their websites.

EO 14183: “Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness”

Directs the Department of Defense to revise medical, personnel and training policies to exclude from military service any individual whose gender differs from the government’s

determination of their sex, asserting that gender dysphoria “conflicts with a soldier’s commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle.”

EO 14187: “Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation”

Directs federal agencies to withhold funding from institutions that provide gender-affirming care — including puberty blockers, hormone therapy and surgeries — to “individuals under 19 years of age” — catching a lot of legal adults in an order that is advertised as “protecting children.” The order also requires HHS to publish a review of existing studies on best practices for care of children with gender dysphoria, which resulted in a controversial report that falsely claimed gender-affirming care was based on weak evidence and pushed for a dangerous kind of therapy instead.

EO 14190: “Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling”

Builds on EO 14168, described earlier. States that K-12 schools that teach materials deemed “anti-American,” including content related to “gender ideology” and “discriminatory equity ideology” (e.g., critical race theory) risk losing federal funding. The attorney general is directed to investigate and prosecute educators who support the social transition of transgender students, such as using preferred names or pronouns, under charges including sexual exploitation of a minor and practicing medicine without a license.

EO 14201: “Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports”

States that educational institutions receiving federal funding must restrict participation in women’s sports to individuals the government recognizes as female, reinterpreting Title IX to exclude transgender women and girls from female sports teams. (The order does not address transgender men participating in men’s sports.) The State Department is directed to push for similar policies internationally and to review visa policies for transgender athletes.

What actions have federal agencies taken in response to recent executive orders?

Federal agencies have begun to restrict gender on identity documents in the following ways:

The Department of State is now only issuing passports and other identifying documents that match the applicant’s “biological sex at birth” and has eliminated X gender markers.

The Social Security Administration is no longer processing gender marker updates.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has updated its policies and forms to remove the option for X gender markers and instead require the applicant’s “biological sex at birth.”

Federal agencies have been directed to remove policy documents and previous guidance that are supportive of LGBTQ+ people.

Federal agencies have removed materials and data related to LGBTQ+ health and stopped collecting data on transgender identity.

The Department of Defense has taken steps to separate gender-expansive service members from the military and prohibit their enlistment.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has begun to phase out gender-affirming care.

What actions can we take?

Collect stories of how executive orders have affected public health practitioners and public health are especially important to share. In the context of a lawsuit, such contributions can become crucial evidence. In some cases, it may be possible to present information anonymously. Outside of the court system, information can be published or shared through the press in op-eds or articles; through presentations; on social media; or in other ways.

Engage in study of the “clobber passages” in the Bible. A splendid resource is Austen Hartke’s *Transforming: The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018), especially chapters 4-10.

Theologically, if we believe that God created humankind (the Hebrew word is plural) in God’s image (Gen 1:27), that means that *each individual human person then is a facet of God’s image*, a piece presenting God’s image to the world. If that is so, then transgender persons already present a part of God’s image to the world, which we obscure if we deny transgender persons legitimacy as human. Thus our prejudiced rejection actually truncates our complete view of God, opening the door to partial views of God, that are imagined to be the total view — which is the working definition of idolatry. God seems to take a dim view of idolatry (Exodus 20:4), making wrongful use of God’s name to support such idolatry (Exodus 20:7), and of bearing false witness against one’s neighbor (Exodus 20:16). By doing so, we also deny ourselves the complete, richly variegated tapestry of humanity, narrowing it to a pre-approved flattened slice.

With this in mind, call/write/email your Senators and Representative about resisting further cutbacks and restoring humane treatment of gender-fluid persons, as a person of faith advocating against these immoral actions.

Review the life and operations of your congregation, to make your community of faith more welcoming: in liturgy, preaching, education, and outreach. As an initial action, print stickers with pronouns, to affix on church name-tags. This sends an immediate signal that this is a welcoming environment. Buy and display a rainbow flag (or trans flag) as your congregation’s public witness — and be prepared for negative reactions by also buying a replacement flag, to put up immediately when (not if!) the rainbow flag is stolen.

Also (courtesy Rev. Jessica Braxton last week):

- Preach about justice, equity, and human dignity as theological imperatives to God, *because* we are Imago DEI (Created in the image of God, God of all, for all, in all).
- Be intentional about spending time with those most affected, groups most oppressed. LGBTQIA+, persons of color, immigrants.
- Walk alongside those in protest of governmental policies that exclude or deny. A person of faith in a space names opposition to Christian Nationalism, affirms dignity and value, and reminds that God loves all.

- Organize events that educate, that mobilize, that shelter, that help with resources for those who are displaced from work or living situations.
- Lead book studies, watch films, by LGBTQIA+ individuals, persons of color.
- Attend city council meetings, town halls, listening sessions, school board meetings and advocate for inclusive policies.
- Support local non-profits doing justice work.
- USE YOUR PLATFORMS, YOUR PULPITS, YOUR PAGES TO STAND UP FOR ALL THOSE CREATED IMAGO DEI.

Sources:

“Executive Orders Affecting LGBTQ+ Communities: FAQs,” ACT for Public Health,
<https://actforpublichealth.org/executive-orders-affecting-lgbtq-communities-faqs/>

“Trump Anti-LGBTQ+ Executive Order Litigation Tracker,” The LGBTQ+ Bar,
<https://lgbtqbar.org/programs/trump-executive-order-tracker/>

“Covering Anti-Trans Executive Orders,” NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists,
<https://www.nlgja.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Covering-Anti-Trans-Executive-Orders.pdf>

Transgender-related Justice Resources:

Erin in the Morning

<https://www.erininthemorning.com/>

Stay up to date on all of the most important pieces of trans and queer news and legislation for the week. I summarize it all complete with links to source documents.

The Trevor Project

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

The Trevor Project is the leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention nonprofit organization for LGBTQ+ young people. We provide information & support to LGBTQ+ young people 24/7, all year round.

Advocates for Trans Equality

<https://transequality.org/>

Advocates for Trans Equality fights for the legal and political rights of transgender people in America.

TransParent

<https://transparentusa.org/>

TransParent envisions a world that honors and affirms the naturally occurring transgender experience. Our mission is to bring compassionate support to parents and caregivers navigating complex issues faced by their gender-expansive children of any age.