

# What You Need to Know About Gender Identity Politics



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## Session 4

THE POLITICAL USE OF THE  
“TRANSGENDER” LABEL

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# Reading 1: Transgender People are Not Sick

Jennifer Roback Morse

## Notes

*Please write any comments or questions for discussion here.*

This article was first published at The Blaze on August 3, 2016, under the title, "Under Obama, Transgenderism Is Not Medical Condition. It's a Political Stepping Stone."

This may seem to be a remarkable headline for a well-known social conservative.

But I must defer to the authority of the Obama administration's Department of Justice. A careful reading of their "Dear Colleague Letter on Transgender Students," has convinced me that the proper understanding of transgender people is not to view them as sick.

I generally like to make a thorough study of an issue that is new to me. I thought I would have to inform myself about medicine and psychology. But the DOJ's letter, and the press release that announced it, "U.S. Departments of Justice and Education Release Joint Guidance to Help Schools Ensure the Civil Rights of Transgender Students" have convinced me that no such careful study is required. Anyone who wants to weigh in on the controversy over "bathroom bills" can do so, with no particular scientific expertise.

By contrast, Intersex is a medically diagnosable condition. According to the Intersex Society of North America, the term "intersex" "is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male." The Intersex Society of North America does not advocate that intersex individuals be treated as a third gender or as having no gender. Instead, they advocate that parents of children born with these conditions work with their physicians to make a long-term, individualized plan for that particular child.

Intersex children are nowhere mentioned in the "Dear Colleague Letter."

Gender Dysphoria is defined this way in the Fifth Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual:

*Gender dysphoria refers to the distress that may accompany the incongruence between one's experienced or expressed gender and one's assigned gender. (pg. 51).*

The term "assigned gender" is what most people would call "biological sex," which of course, is not "assigned" at all. Rather biological sex exists from conception and is literally in every cell of the body. Biological sex reveals itself at birth for all to see.

Gender Dysphoria is nowhere mentioned in the "Dear Colleague Letter."

The "Dear Colleague Letter" is not about the Intersex medical condition or the Gender Dysphoria psychological condition. The "Dear Colleague Letter" makes this very clear when it states on page two, under the heading Compliance with Title IX:

*Under Title IX, there is no medical diagnosis or treatment requirement that students must meet as a prerequisite to being treated consistent with their gender identity.*

Ah. We see that for purposes of law, children of any age can diagnose themselves as transgenders. Elsewhere, the guidelines make it clear that students may present themselves as a different sex at school without telling their parents. Students of any age can change their self-identification as they wish. The "guidelines" offer no guidance whatsoever about this possibility.

A student can suddenly decide transgender is cool, after a binge on social media. They can decide to irritate their parents. They can decide they want to fit in with the kids they meet at the LGBT after-school program. And yes, some boys can decide they want to see the inside of the girls' locker room.

We are on one hand, meant to think that transgenders are unfortunate souls who need special attention from society in order to fit in and feel better about themselves. But on the other hand, we are told that no medical or psychological diagnosis is needed.

On one hand, we are told that the unique situation of these children requires special accommodation from the entire society. On the other hand, we are presented with a one-size-fits-all legal commandment. The federal government hands down the mandate telling each and every school district in America how they must handle the unique needs of these children.

Children with either Intersex medical conditions or Gender Dysphoria psychological conditions need more privacy and parental help. But the Department of Justice "Dear Colleague" letter will limit parental involvement and give children less privacy.

Allowing a child to define themselves into the "transgender" category without parental involvement or knowledge does accomplish one thing, though. It allows kids to become part of the political Transgender movement at the lowest possible cost. It requires the schools to become part of the ideological destabilization of the concept of innate biological sex differences.

This is why I say that transgenders are not sick. Oh, some of them may be. But some of the kids who define themselves as transgender under these guidelines will be lonely kids trying to find friends. Some will be horny and predatory. Some will be conformist to the newest ideological fad. Some will just be ornery.

Under the Obama guidelines, "transgender" is a not a medical or psychological term. "Transgender" is a political term.

# Reading 2: To Ensure the Civil Rights of Transgender Students

**Jennifer Roback Morse**

**Notes**

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Statement of the Ruth Institute on the Department of Justice Guidelines to Ensure the Civil Rights of Transgender Students

The Ruth Institute objects to these far-reaching Guidelines of questionable legality. Among our chief concerns:

- These Guidelines, if implemented, will not actually help real children, struggling with unique and complex issues, such as Intersex students and students who experience Gender Dysphoria. (See the complete analysis below.)
- The Guidelines permit students to present themselves as “transgender,” without the knowledge of their parents and without any adult input at all.
- The Guidelines create a class of students called “Transgender” which is a politically defined and not a medically defined class. The government has no competency to do such a thing.
- These Guidelines, if implemented, will certainly harm the millions of ordinary children who are not struggling with gender identity issues at this time.
- These far-reaching Guidelines from the Federal government encroach on the legitimate prerogatives of states, localities and families.
- These Guidelines were issued through a “Dear Colleague” letter, which may or may not be legally binding. Indeed, the 23 states that are suing the Department of Justice argue that such a letter is not binding on local schools.
- School boards are well within their moral and legal rights to decline to participate in the federal government’s war against nature.

# Suggested Questions About the Readings:

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1. What is the difference between intersex and gender dysphoria? Why does the difference matter?
  2. What is the difference between “transgender” and intersex?
  3. What is the political use of the term “transgender”?
  4. How do you feel thinking about the term “transgender” as a political category?
  5. With whom would you like to share this material?
  6. How can the members of the group support you this month or week?
  7. Whom would you like to invite to the next session?
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