



For Immediate Release

February 24, 2017

WPATH Supports Student Health and Safety

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) today affirms its commitment to the health and safety of transgender students in the U.S. and across the world.

In an ominous action for the rights of transgender students, the Trump administration eliminated U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice guidance that provided rationale and encouragement to public school administrators across the country to recognize, support, and protect the importance of gender identity for all students, including those who are transgender.

Relevant federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, have not changed. That act states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The law applies to students of any age.

A joint statement, issued late on February 22 by "acting" officials in the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education, expressly rescinded two documents issued by officials in the Obama administration which provided evidence for including gender identity as a component of sex, and procedures for including transgender students in sex-segregated activities and facilities. The statement opines that the previous guidance did "not (...) contain extensive legal analysis" and that "formal public rulemaking should have occurred prior to the adoption of any such policy."

Although the statement declares that "(a)ll schools must ensure that all students, including LGBT students, are able to learn and thrive in a safe environment", and that the two Departments are committed to the application of Title IX and other federal laws to ensure (...) protection" from discrimination, bullying, or harassment, it also highlights that "the Departments believe that, in this context, there must be due regard for the primary role of the States and local school districts in establishing educational policy."

By invoking States' rights, many WPATH members believe that the current administration seeks to create a context in which to establish policies defining sex as nothing more than one's assigned sex at birth. Such policies blatantly reject established science, and could severely impact the health—and lives—of transgender students and their families. WPATH members in the U.S. region, and more widely, stand ready to defend the science of gender diversity and fight against the health disparities that this regressive action is likely to exacerbate.

For additional background on this story, see <https://nyti.ms/2lvgnFO>

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health is a nonprofit educational association of over 1400 physicians, mental health providers, and social scientists whose work impacts the lives of transgender, transsexual, and gender-nonconforming people worldwide.