



NEWS RELEASE

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Oregon, California and Washington Education Leaders Oppose Federal Changes Redefining the Concept of Gender

(Salem, Ore.) – Oregon Department of Education Director Colt Gill partnered with the top education officials from California and Washington to send a letter opposing federal attempts to redefine the concept of sex and gender government-wide. The joint letter was sent to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services today in coordination with California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal.

The letter states, “We believe these changes will be dangerous and detrimental for the millions of individuals in our country who identify as transgender, many of whom are school age, and are our students and part of our school communities.”

Oregon has taken several steps to create a safe, inclusive environment for students and other constituents. In 2016 ODE released [guidelines](#) to boost development of school procedures and district policies related to transgender and gender nonconforming students. Oregon led the nation by allowing a non-binary gender option on driver’s licenses starting in 2017. Earlier this year ODE released a memo outlining how school districts should offer students and staff a non-binary gender option on student registration forms and data submissions.

“It is our responsibility to create caring school environments that are safe and welcoming for all students,” Gill said. “Denying a person’s gender identity or forcing conformity to this federal rule change is disrespectful, discriminatory, and harmful. Each of our children deserve more. They deserve schools that accept, respect, and serve them well.”

The letter can be [found online here](#).

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