



November 9, 2018

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and its 60 leading U.S. research universities, I write to express our deep objections to a proposal reportedly under consideration by your agency to limit the definition of an individual's sex to either female or male as determined by a person's genitals at birth. We urge you to reject the proposal and ensure that any potential policy changes respect the dignity of all individuals and not deny the equal protection of our great nation's laws to individuals who are transgender or who have a non-binary gender identity.

Beyond removing or limiting critically important protections against harassment and discrimination for such individuals, the proposal would also create confusion and possibly conflicting legal mandates related to health, housing, and other services universities provide to students, faculty, staff, and others in our campus communities. This would likely result in the need for new university policies and practices to alleviate confusion and to ensure that all members of our campus communities could continue to receive services and benefits regardless of their gender or gender identity.

Our universities take seriously their moral obligation to protect the dignity of *all* individuals by providing welcoming, inclusive, and safe educational communities. We agree wholeheartedly with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos's statement that everyone is owed "a commitment to ensure they have access to a learning environment that is free of discrimination, bullying and harassment." This commitment cannot be upheld unless federal policies are founded on respect for all individuals, whatever their gender or gender identities. To that end, we believe it is imperative that the federal government confirm the continued availability of Title IX and Title VII protections for all of our students, faculty, and staff.

Sincerely,

Mary Sue Coleman
President

cc: The Honorable Betsy DeVos, U.S. Secretary of Education

- Boston University
- Brandeis University
- Brown University
- California Institute of Technology
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Case Western Reserve University
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Duke University
- Emory University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Harvard University
- Indiana University
- Iowa State University
- The Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- McGill University
- Michigan State University
- New York University
- Northwestern University
- The Ohio State University
- The Pennsylvania State University
- Princeton University
- Purdue University
- Rice University
- Rutgers University – New Brunswick
- Stanford University
- Stony Brook University –
- State University of New York
- Texas A&M University
- Tulane University
- University at Buffalo –
- State University of New York
- The University of Arizona
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- The University of Chicago
- University of Colorado Boulder
- University of Florida
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- The University of Iowa
- The University of Kansas
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Michigan
- University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- University of Missouri, Columbia
- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Oregon
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Rochester
- University of Southern California
- The University of Texas at Austin
- University of Toronto
- University of Virginia
- University of Washington
- The University of Wisconsin - Madison
- Vanderbilt University
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Yale University