

The *New Threat* in Your Child's School



THE POWER OF THE EXECUTIVE: President Obama is the first to seek special rights for gender-confused Americans through executive orders.

by Matt Kaufman

The White House is seeking to normalize transgenderism—starting in the nation's classrooms.

“Without Fanfare, Obama Advances Transgender Rights.”

With that headline, a widely circulated June 21 story from The Associated Press called attention to a little-noticed White House agenda: President Obama is trying to normalize transgenderism in much the same way his administration has sought to normalize homosexuality.

It's an effort that's taken many forms. Some are substantial, like adding “gender identity” to non-discrimination rules and having government-contracted health insurers cover sex-change operations. Others are symbolic, like including transgenderism in selected speeches and singling out

gender-confused students to participate in the annual White House Easter egg roll.

“He has been the best president for transgender rights, and nobody else is in second place,” Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, told AP reporter Lisa Leff.

Many Americans wouldn't be as thrilled as Keisling, of course—and Obama knows it. Leff notes that “transgender rights groups and the administration have agreed on a low-key approach, both to skirt resistance and to send the message that changes are not a big deal.”

But in April, the federal Department of Education (DOE) quietly announced something that is actually a very big deal: That Title IX, a provision of 1972 education legislation that bars gender-based discrimination at schools receiving federal funds, also applies to gender-confused students.

In keeping with the low-key strategy, the controversial interpretation came in a non-controversial

guise: a document on reducing sexual abuse in schools. But it was applied to all complaints of discrimination, not just those involving violence. If anyone doubted the broad intent of the document, it was confirmed a few weeks later by the president himself.

When the subject came up in a June 10 interview with Tumblr CEO David Karp, Obama talked about how Title IX had already created a culture change because it was “applied vigorously in schools.” Then he made clear that he intends to do the same with transgenderism.

“Title IX is a very powerful tool,” Obama said. “The fact that we are applying it to transgender students means they are going to be in a position to assert their rights if and when they see they are being discriminated (against). ... And that could manifest itself in a whole variety of ways.”

Restrooms and Locker Rooms

The administration’s move is a radical reinterpretation of the law, says Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Counsel Greg Baylor.

“It’s been understood for decades that ‘sex’ meant biological sex,” Baylor tells *Citizen*. “They used these sexual-assault guidelines as a cover to issue a new understanding of gender identity.

“There’s a serious question as to whether the Department of Education has exceeded its authority,” he adds. “At the least, it shows disrespect for the legislative process and the right of the people’s representatives to determine our laws.”

The policy’s impact could be widely felt, Baylor warns, because practically every public educational institution—and many private ones—receives federal funds, directly or indirectly.

“It’s an alarming development,” he says. “The federal government holds a lot of cards. It’s not just offering an opinion. It’s applying pressure to adopt its worldview.”

And it’s been applying that pressure even before the April announcement—for the last few years, in fact.

In 2011, a female elementary school student in Arcadia, Calif., who identifies as a boy complained to the DOE because she wasn’t allowed to use boys’ restrooms or locker rooms, or to stay with male students on an overnight trip. Last year, DOE “reached an agreement” with the school district to treat the girl as a boy, revamp its policies and retrain its teachers.

DOE hasn’t been the only agency to bring the pressure. In 2012, the Department of Justice pushed the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith into letting a

38-year-old anatomically male student use the women’s rooms on campus—rejecting the university’s proposed compromise to create a number of gender-neutral restrooms.

But with the Title IX announcement, school districts around the country need to decide their positions, Baylor notes—which makes it important to contact them now.

“This ruling is brand new, and parents need to make their voices heard up front,” he says. “Schools are getting pressure from the government. They need to hear from parents too.”

‘We’ve Got to Keep Going’

Though media accounts often hail these developments—with *Time* magazine featuring a cover billing transgenderism as “America’s next civil-rights frontier”—the Obama administration isn’t doing anyone any favors, says Baylor.

“There’s a worldview at work behind all this,” he explains. “It doesn’t view gender-identity disorder as an unfortunate condition, but as something to be celebrated and promoted. It’s not consistent with a Christian worldview—or with reality.”

Dale O’Leary, an author and journalist who has researched and written on gender issues for years, emphatically agrees.

“We have to keep in mind that (people who suffer from gender-identity disorder) are wounded people,” she tells *Citizen*. “But they refuse to acknowledge the wound.”

Instead, O’Leary says, they try to fix it through redefining their gender—and now through demanding that society accept that redefinition. The White House is only making things worse.

“The Obama administration is not fixing their wounds,” she says. “It’s telling them, ‘You’re fine—it’s society that’s the problem.’ But social acceptance doesn’t heal childhood wounds. They’re condemning these boys and girls to a terrible life.”

And it’s up to the rest of us to say so, she adds—to reject false compassion and say what people need to hear, not what they want to hear.

“As Christians, we cannot lie,” O’Leary says. “We have to be courageous enough to tell the truth. We have to get the message out. It’s so important. Even if we lose the first 20 times, we’ve got to keep going.” ■

TAKE ACTION

For more information on gender-identity issues in the schools and how to address them, download Focus on the Family’s new resource for parents at www.focusonthefamily.com/EmpowerParents.