

Students should oppose Trump administration’s definition of gender, support transgender people



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News Editor

On Oct. 21, The New York Times published an article that broke the news that the Department of Health and Human Services is spearheading an effort that is attempting to redefine “gender” as something “on a biological basis that is clear, grounded in science, objective, and administrable.” This definition would eliminate not only the civil rights but the recognition of transgender people, as well as people who don’t define their gender based on the binary.

This unsympathetic proposal disregards currently established law, as well as credible science to degrade and devalue trans citizens. The acceptance of this definition would symbolize forgetting transgender citizens’ rights to equal access to healthcare, protection, and undeniable fair treatment under the law.

In a society where minorities are seemingly becoming more accepted and where great strides are being made in the name of gender and sexual identity, such a proposal seems ridiculous after the progress that has been made.

It is easy for those who do not face discrimination based on gender or sexuality to live unaware of what members of the LGBTQ+ community face daily. In a town like Fort Collins, which is known for being accepting and leaning politically to the left, some assume discrimination based on gender is not common.

However, freshman Jason Bailey tells a different story. His assigned gender at birth was female, but at 6 years old he knew something was different. “I hung around boys, and wanted to play sports with them and go to the bathroom with them,” Bailey said. “At first, my mom tried to convince me that I was just a tomboy, but I knew that that wasn’t it.”

Bailey came out in seventh grade. After coming out, he faced harsh verbal and physical bullying from his peers and even his friends. Students purposefully called him the wrong name and pronouns to degrade his identity, and he was physically assaulted. He got bullied so much he had to switch schools several times.

Bailey has found help through talking with school counselors, a family and gender therapist, and a psychiatrist. He is also on medication for both

depression and anxiety.

He has not let the negativity he has received from others stop him from discovering his personal identity. He is currently on hormone blockers and testosterone and is getting chest surgery later this year.

Bailey also does not want others to experience the same things he did, and urges non-transgender students to be kind and accepting.

“They are probably going through one of the hardest times of their life,” he said. “Be understanding. Respect their names and their pronouns.”

Counselor Tanya Vigil has been at FCHS for over 10 years and has helped many transgender students with coming out and self-acceptance. Her office has always been a safe place where any student can go for a confidential talk, and feel no fear of being judged or misunderstood.

“I never want anyone to have to go through this journey all by themselves,” she said. “It’s a pleasure to join students on their paths and help them figure out their destinations.”

Vigil has witnessed restroom policy changes and name policy changes at FCHS. There are now all-

gender restrooms (restrooms that students of any gender can use) in the counseling office in order to provide transgender/ gender non-conforming students a safe place where they know they will not be bullied, harassed or questioned. Additionally, the district has made it possible to change the first name of a student to their preferred name instead of just listing it as a nickname.

“These changes are tremendous, but there is still so much we can do,” Vigil said. “I would love to see people being kind and accepting and using the name and the pronouns that the student wants you to. Our brains are trained to automatically go to he/she by what someone looks like. It’s a hard mindset to switch, but it is extremely important to work on. We need to allow all people to have a safe, inclusive environment, including students, teachers and administrators.”

This “inclusive environment” cannot be fulfilled through allowing the gender definition changing proposal to be accepted. A definition instituted by the Department of Health and Human Services threatens to erase the transgender population in the United States. We cannot let our administration reverse the progress that our society has made. A strong stance must be taken against this inhumane proposal.



Students should voice opinions within principal hiring process

In January Poudre School District will select a new principal for FCHS. As part of the process, PSD is seeking input from staff, students and families. The last chance for students to give our individual opinions will be Wednesday, Dec. 5 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the LTC. After that, it will be up to only two students out of a population of over 1,800 to sit on the selection committee.

Because the principal will make major decisions that directly impact us, we cannot allow two voices to do the speaking for us. We should all attend the December meeting to provide input on the potential new principal.

According to the process overview provided by the district, they will ask four basic questions: “1. What does Fort Collins need in their next leader? 2. What do Fort Collins students need in their new principal? 3. What makes Fort Collins unique? and 4. What suggestions for important questions to ask during the interview process do you have?”

We should use the voice we are given to make the changes we want to see. The new principal will have the whole school under his or her control, and we need to talk about what we want in a leader, the atmosphere the leader should bring, the characteristics a leader should have and other topics important to students. A new principal will bring new rules and protocols for us to follow, new budget priorities, and a new administrative

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style that will impact everything we do.

Over Principal Mark Eversole’s years, we have been fortunate to have such a focused, approachable, supportive, and kind leader. When he is not working in his office or participating in district meetings, he is often in the hallways, visiting classrooms, and attending school events. He celebrates our successes with us, and he mourns our losses with us. On spirit days, he dresses up with us, and he is not too shy to wear a pair of lamb’s ears and purple sneakers to encourage us to embrace Lambkin spirit.

Eversole has also valued students’ voices and supported them in the efforts they undertake. He trusts adult sponsors and advisers to work with responsible students, which has allowed student groups to have more control over their own creations. For example, he has allowed Tower Theatre to put on the shows they want, KLYDTV to publish videos about important topics, and has maintained freedom of the press in the case of the student newspaper.

For us, this has meant we can get true journalism experience that will prepare us for the actual field. We have won seven state awards and been inducted into the Hall of Fame. We have also been able to write our own opinions in our Perspectives

section and choose what to report on. Eversole has also helped us when our paper has incited controversy. He has not tried to restrict our voice or stop students from doing important work.

We need a principal who will support all student voices, especially when it comes to the tough and important conversations. Our leader shouldn’t have a philosophy to limit students’ thoughts and ideas but to expand them. Whether it is on the stage or the page—or anywhere else in the building—students deserve a principal who allows them to speak their minds. We need to make sure our next principal will continue to support students’ efforts, especially when limiting us could mean our learning experience will also be diminished.

As we start our search for a new dedicated and principled principal, we need to take the opportunity to speak up for someone who will keep the best interests of the student body in mind who will work to better our school, and whom we will be proud to see walking through the hallways with us and representing us in the community.

Because protecting student voice is so important we want to help you have your voice heard, so editor-in-chief Molly Lubbers has pledged to attend the December meeting and report students’ opinions to the district. If you would like Lubbers to share your ideas, tweet them to us @fchsspilledink, or email Spilled Ink at fchsspilledink@gmail.com.