



STREAMLINING IDENTITY DOCUMENT CHANGES

Texas law authorizes people to legally change their name and gender marker on official documents, which allows transgender Texans to ensure that their documents match their gender identity. But the process is not clearly laid out in statute, resulting in a patchwork of different requirements across the state.

IDENTITY DOCUMENTS ESSENTIAL FOR EVERYDAY TASKS

Texans use identity documents like a driver's license or state ID for all sorts of essential everyday tasks like applying for a job, renting an apartment, registering for school, boarding an airplane, checking into a hotel, voting and more. Transgender Texans who are unable to update their identification documents face unnecessary and burdensome hurdles to basic activities that are necessary to move through the world.

IDs are particularly crucial when it comes to employment and housing, where the lack of updated identification can serve as a barrier to economic stability. When a transgender person's ID is called into question, whether on suspicion of lying or intent to harass, it amounts to an invasion of privacy, opens the door to discrimination, and increases stigma.

LACK OF POLICY HAS LEFT 77% OF TRANSGENDER TEXANS WITHOUT OPTIONS

Texas is one of only 5 states that has no set process or written policy in state law to update an individual's name and gender marker on identity documents.¹ With no set guidance, the requirements for updating documents are up to the interpretation of individual district court judges and can change drastically depending on the judge or the jurisdiction.

This result of this lack of clarity is that **only 3 of Texas' 254 counties consistently approve name and gender marker changes.** This is unacceptable.

An estimated 77% of transgender Texans do not have formal identification matching their name and gender identity²

ADOPT A SIMPLIFIED, CONSISTENT PROCESS THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF VITAL STATISTICS

Adopting a simplified, consistent procedure will make it easier to update identity documents for transgender Texans, eliminating barriers and potential complications for housing and employment and opening up opportunity.

Taking the courts out of the process also frees up important judicial resources for more appropriate matters. The U.S. State Department provides a simple, clear process for updating federal identity documents such as passports that can be used as a starting template.

¹ lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity_document_laws/birth_certificate

² <https://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTSTXStateReport%281017%29.pdf>

Related Bills in the 87th Legislature: HB 338 (Rosenthal, D-Houston), HB 2024 (Rosenthal, D-Houston), HB 3227 (Hinojosa, D-Austin), HB 3086 (Beckley, D-Carrollton), HB 4180 (Beckley, D-Carrollton), SB 210 (Eckhardt, D-Austin), SB 1121 (N. Johnson, D-Dallas)