



Trump Administration's Proposed Rule Allows Discrimination Against LGBTs

Public health services ranging from adoption to HIV programs would be permitted to discriminate while receiving federal funds.

November 1, 2019 By [Trent Straube](#)

Do you run a social service agency that discriminates against LGBT people because of religious reasons? Well, here's some good news: According to a proposed rule by the Trump administration, your organization will be able to receive federal taxpayer funds.

Obama-era regulations do not permit agencies that receive federal funding to discriminate, but the new [proposed rule](#) announced November 1 by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) seeks to change that.

[As MetroWeekly reports](#), the rule was announced on the first day of National Adoption Month, and the proposed rule is notable for allowing adoption and foster care agencies to discriminate against LGBT people seeking to adopt—as long as the discrimination is based on religious beliefs.

“With this rule, we are witnessing the full force of the United States government being used to enshrine discrimination into law—all at the expense of defenseless foster children who need and deserve loving homes,” Sandy Santana, the executive director of Children’s Rights, told MetroWeekly.

Civil rights groups point out that the proposed rule allows discrimination in the administration of numerous HHS-supported public health services, including those focused on HIV prevention, homelessness and substance use recovery.

“This rule is an abuse of taxpayer dollars in the name of empowering hatred and bigotry towards society’s most vulnerable members,” wrote Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, in a [press release](#). “Stigma and prejudice are fueling a public health crisis among transgender people across the country, one that manifests itself as suicide, addiction, intimate partner violence and HIV. Enabling providers of lifesaving services to worsen these crises by rejecting transgender people is a moral crime and a severe abdication of HHS’s mission to preserve public health.”

The center’s press release notes that transgender people are three times more likely to be living

with HIV.

Lambda Legal, which advocates for HIV and LGBT people, [also released a statement](#) condemning the proposed rule. “HHS is charged with protecting the health and well-being of all people, but its actions today demonstrate once again its complete disregard for its mission,” noted Sharon McGowan, chief strategy officer at Lambda Legal. “Today’s proposed rule rolls back critical protections against discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion and, in doing so, puts at risk some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, including LGBT people who are poor or experiencing homelessness; LGBT seniors; and LGBT youth in out-of-home care, including foster children in need of loving families; people living with HIV; and many others.”

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