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Comment:

As a clinical mental health professional specializing in providing services to Trans and Gender-Diverse (TGD) individuals, I was shocked and appalled by Mr. Boonstra's writings, and I am glad that the court is taking this prudent and necessary step in updating rules to respect the basic human dignity of parties before the court. There is extensive psychological, sociological, and medical research dating back decades that supports the existence and validity of TGD individuals, and also demonstrates beyond any doubt that discrimination against them creates tangible harm. Knowingly misgendering and mis-naming TGD people is an act of hostility and compounds minority stress, leading to negative biomedical and psychological outcomes. Furthermore, being misidentified legally has very real implications for TGD people's ability to access all manner of institutions. If a person's identification doesn't match legal documentation, that creates barriers to access to ID, passport, housing, employment, educational, financial, and yes legal services and opportunities. Hopefully, this court will be prudent enough to comply with the newly expanded ELCRA and eliminate the use of overt discriminatory language directed at people on the basis of their gender identity and presentation.