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Lawmakers demand meeting with Trump officials on anti-trans rollbacks

Decrying the rollback of transgender rights in the Trump administration, lawmakers led by Rep. Joseph Kennedy III (D-Mass) are seeking a meeting with civil rights officials in federal agencies “to end the current pattern of publicly-funded and government-sanctioned discrimination.”

The letter, dated Feb. 13 and obtained Monday exclusively by the Washington Blade, is addressed to the heads of eight federal departments and calls for a roundtable meeting on transgender issues with each of those agencies’ directors of the Office of Civil Rights.

Included in the letter as evidence of transgender rollbacks are the withdrawal of guidance assuring transgender kids access to school restrooms consistent with their gender identity, Trump’s transgender military ban and the Justice Department’s disavowal of Title VII protections for transgender people.

“During the first year of the this administration, transgender Americans have endured a systematic attack on their dignity, rights and freedom,” the letter says.

Specific attention is given to the creation of a Conscience & Religious Freedom Division within the Department of Health & Human Services and reports the Education Department isn’t investigating transgender civil rights claims in school.

“The Trump administration should no longer encourage doctors to deny health care services to patients in need, promote an education systems that make children feel unwelcome in their own schools, allow employers to deny jobs to workers simply because of their gender identity and turn away patriots from serving in the military simply because of who they are,” the letter says.

The letter is public on the same day as a [Buzzfeed](#) report quoting a spokesperson affirming the Education Department won’t take up civil rights complaints of transgender kids who say their school is barring them from the restroom consistent with their gender identity.

Joining Kennedy, who’s chair of the Congressional Transgender Task Force, in signing the letter are fellow task force members Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.), Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) and A. Donald McEachin (D-Va.).

The letter requests a response from the federal agencies on setting up an appointment for the roundtable meeting no longer than Feb. 23.

A House aide said the White House wasn't included in the letter because lawmakers wanted to speak to the directors of each department's civil rights offices.

The Blade has placed a request for comment in with each of the eight federal departments on whether a meeting will be granted.

<http://www.washingtonblade.com/2018/02/12/lawmakers-demand-meeting-trump-officials-transgender-rollbacks/>