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## Transgender rights targeted in executive order signed by Oklahoma governor

The order requires state agencies and boards to define the words “female” and “male” to correspond with a person’s sex assigned at birth.



— Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt signs a bill narrowing the definition of "male" and "female" in Oklahoma City on Tuesday.

Chris Landsberger / The Oklahoman via USA TODAY Network

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**By Associated Press**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt on Tuesday directed state agencies to use narrow definitions of “female” and “male,” in the latest attack on transgender rights in a state that already has laws targeting bathroom use, health care and sports teams for transgender people.

Stitt signed the [executive order](#) flanked by women from the anti-trans group Independent Women’s Voice, including Riley Gaines, a former University of Kentucky swimmer known for criticizing an NCAA decision allowing [transgender swimmer Lia Thomas](#) to compete against her in a women’s championship race.

“Today we’re taking a stand against this out-of-control gender ideology that is eroding the very foundation of our society,” Stitt said. “We are going to be safeguarding the very essence of what it means to be a woman.

“Oklahomans are fed up with attempts to confuse the word ‘woman’ and turn it into some kind of ambiguous definition that harms real women.”

In addition to requiring state agencies and boards to define the words “female” and “male” to correspond with the person’s sex assigned at birth, the executive order also includes definitions for the words “man,” “boy,” “woman,” “girl,” “father” and

“mother.” The order specifically defines a female as a “person whose biological reproductive system is designed to produce ova” and a male as a “person whose biological reproductive system is designed to fertilize the ova of a female.”

It also directs schools and other state agencies to use these definitions when collecting vital statistics and further directs schools to provide dedicated restrooms and locker room facilities for boys and girls, respectively.

Stitt’s order, dubbed “The Women’s Bill of Rights” by its supporters, is the latest Oklahoma policy to attack the rights of transgender people and is part of a growing trend in conservative states. Stitt signed a bill earlier this year that made it a crime for health care workers to provide [gender-affirming medical care for minors](#), and has previously signed measures to prohibit transgender girls and women from [playing on female sports teams](#) and prevent transgender children from [using school bathrooms](#) that correspond to their gender identity.

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“This executive order is neither about rights, nor is it about protecting women,” said Nicole McAfee, executive director of Freedom Oklahoma, which supports the rights of trans people. She called it a “thinly veiled attack” that codifies discrimination against transgender women.

House Democratic Leader Cyndi Munson accused the governor of using “partisan, polarizing politics” to further divide Oklahomans.

“Once again, the Republican supermajority continues their government overreach by infringing on the rights of citizens,” said Munson, and Oklahoma City Democrat.

Stitt’s action comes during legal battles in neighboring Kansas over the meaning of [a state law](#) that Republican legislators also christened “The Women’s Bill of Rights,” which rolled back transgender rights. It was based on language from several anti-trans groups, including Independent Women’s

Voice.

Stitt also previously signed an [executive order](#) prohibiting any changes to person's gender on birth certificates.

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Associated Press

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