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I have learned from my everyday experiences as a trans individual that numerous practical challenges face anyone transgendered or non-normatively gendered on a quotidian basis.

As a soon-to-graduate senior, I am officially entering the job market for the first time in my life. As someone non-normatively gendered, I have had to decide which box to check – M or F – in order to minimize the confusion and hassle that could detract from an interview situation. I don't consistently pass as male, and therefore I've decided to check the "F" box on most applications. However, this means that I need to adhere to the female dress code designated by potential employers. This poses for me an enhanced and intensified version of the typical "what to wear" challenge. Without being guaranteed of the openness of my potential employer, I can't wear a tie when applying as female – and yet I don't own any traditionally "female" attire, and, even if I did, wearing it would only exacerbate my divergence from conventional gender norms.

These seemingly trivial dilemmas and moments of confusion add up over the course of each day and exact a definite and tangible cost. Some people who perceive me as male and then discover that I am female feel guilt or resentment at having been somehow "deceived" by me. In an interview or analogous situation, this causes me much anxiety and forces me to be constantly, acutely aware of the way in which I am being perceived with respect to gender. Without the assurance of basic, fundamental understanding on the part of a potential employer, I can't relax and am rendered unable to focus entirely on the interview itself and presenting my qualifications for the job.

It is exhausting to bear the burden of constantly teaching, of explaining discrepancies between my legal documentation and the way in which I am perceived, and of dealing with infantilization from people who (however subconsciously) treat me as though I am a fifteen-year-old boy even when they know I am 21 years old.

I can certainly attest that the codification of the protection of individuals on the basis of gender identity and expression would be of immense value in affirming support for not only transgendered people but for anyone non-normatively gendered or aesthetically androgynous. It will be a crucial step towards sparing us the daily struggles that accumulate and divert our energies from the places where they are most productively and importantly spent.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Loren Krywanczyk

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