

Response to Gov. Nathan Deal's Press Statement on the Transgender Bathroom Letter

May 18, 2016

We, the undersigned, welcome Governor Nathan Deal's statement in response to the unlawful decree issued May 13, 2016 by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, directing that all public schools open up restrooms, locker rooms, dormitories, and probably sports teams to members of either sex. We are especially pleased that the Governor pledged to work with the Attorney General and the State School Superintendent "to protect the interests of Georgia's children from this abuse of federal executive authority."

A similar statement by Attorney General Sam Olens, promising to take steps to ensure that decisions about transgender accommodations are made at the appropriate level, is also a good first step. As we realize, since this is merely a letter of coercion without any force of law, it may be premature for the Attorney General to initiate litigation until the federal government actually moves forward with financial penalties. We are glad that he is willing to step in at the appropriate time. But why wait? He could join North Carolina's suit against the federal government right now, an action we encourage him to take.

We would also like to see Governor Deal boldly join Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas in pushing back against this social-engineering project of President Obama's. Rather than simply handing off the issue to State Superintendent Richard Woods and local school systems, we expect Governor Deal to put the full weight of his office against this federal overreach. While we trust Superintendent Woods to do the right thing, and while it is true that policy about transgender accommodations can certainly be handled by local schools, the Governor should also encourage local school systems to defy the directive. The Governor has freely exercised his influence over education matters such as standards, assessments, and so-called "failing schools"; he should do the same on an issue that is so fundamental to student privacy and safety.

We also ask the Governor to notify local school systems that his office will offer them all possible support, including funding to cover potential litigation costs, if they refuse to comply with the decree. This is a time for bold leadership, not reticence.

We also call on local superintendents and local school boards to protect their students from this harmful social engineering by refusing to comply with the unlawful decree.

Finally, we urge the Georgia legislature to take whatever action is necessary to protect our state, our local school systems, and most importantly our children from this radical and dangerous federal overreach.

Sincerely,

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