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TLDEF Applauds Obama Administration for Directing Schools to Allow Transgender Students to Use Appropriate Bathrooms

New York, NY - The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF) applauds the Obama Administration for issuing a directive to all public schools in the nation stating they must allow transgender students to use bathrooms that match who they are as boys and girls.

Today the U.S. Education and Justice Departments **sent a letter** and **guidance** to every school district in the U.S. reminding them of their obligations under Title IX to protect transgender students from discrimination, which includes ensuring that students can use bathrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identity.

The letter reads in part: "A school may not require transgender students to use facilities inconsistent with their gender identity or to use individual-user facilities when other students are not required to do so."

The letter also states that "to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of sex requires schools to provide transgender students equal access to educational programs and activities even in circumstances in which other students, parents, or community members raise objections or concerns. As is consistently recognized in civil rights cases, the desire to accommodate others' discomfort cannot justify a policy that singles out and disadvantages a particular class of students."

Statement from TLDEF Executive Director Michael Silverman

"This action is a huge milestone in the fight to protect transgender students in our nation's schools. We strongly commend the Obama Administration for giving schools this vital tool to ensure that all transgender students can learn in a safe environment, free from discrimination.

"TLDEF has been on the forefront of the fight for equal treatment of transgender students. In

2013, we won a **landmark victory** before the Colorado Civil Rights Division, when it ruled that 6-year-old Coy Mathis' elementary school had unlawfully discriminated against her when it denied her access to the girls' bathroom because she is transgender. That ruling opened the door for transgender students and their families to seek fairness and to demand that they be treated just like everyone else in school.

"Today's directive by the federal government sends a strong and clear message: Transgender students may not be singled out for discrimination and must be treated equally in school.

"As transgender people continue to face a barrage of legislative attacks throughout the country focused on issues like bathroom access, today's move by the federal government is a clear sign that the federal government, like the vast majority of Americans, stands on the side of fairness, justice and equal treatment for all Americans."

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About the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF): TLDEF is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, and public policy efforts. Read more at: <http://transgenderlegal.org>.