

Freedom of self

By: Kyle Melhberger @KMehlberger

Being who one truly is an unimaginably difficult feat. The world is filled with other's opinions, scraping and shaving away at anybody's inner belief of who they are. This is true for anyone under the transgender umbrella. Transgender people are people who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. They transition to either of those gender roles. Recently, President Joe Biden passed a slew of executive orders that created many anti-discrimination measures that helped trans people, which sparked talk from both sides of the political spectrum. This topic is one that is clouded with buzzwords, repeatable phrases, and pure hatred in some cases, so it can be hard to sift through the drivel and form an educated opinion.

Transgender people exist, and their existence warrants understanding and acceptance. However, as this acceptance is made law, there is tremendous

pushback from many offended parties in almost all cases. This is the case when deciding their place in athletics. There is an obvious difference in physical prowess between most people assigned male at birth and those assigned female, but even with this in mind it's impossible to answer the question "should trans people be able to enter the sport's team of their preferred gender?" with a simple "yes" or no." Some trans people far into their transition are on Hormone Replacement Therapy, which is taking medication that both stops the production of certain hormones and replaces those hormones with ones more produced by the other sex. This results in physical changes, like differences in body fat distribution and muscle mass. As such, it should be more complex than just throwing people who are born male or female in the same sports categories.

Another large facet of what people talk about when discussing trans people is their place in public restrooms, with a lot of alarm being raised constantly. This manner of attack is built on unnecessary fear, formed atop unshakeable disgust towards these

people. The main idea behind declaring this a big "issue" is that trans people (mainly trans women) are predators, trying to get in restrooms for their own sick desires. The claim is false though. This wave of trans people committing violence in restrooms isn't happening, even with them being allowed in the restroom of their choice. While there are few fringe cases, single people don't completely represent entire groups of people. It's not like public restrooms are these spotless sanctuaries either, most of them are gross places that people go in, elbow the stall door open, gag at whatever is in the toilet already, and then leave after washing their hands down to the bone. Trans people just want to do what most people do in a bathroom: go to the bathroom.

There is quite a bit to talk about trans people, too much to fit into a concise newspaper story. But this is an topic that needs talking, as it's one that affects a

group of people facing heavy discrimination, and denying them the rights they deserve would be a disservice to the standards of freedom that our country is built on. After all, above many other freedoms treated as cornerstones for America, is the greatest freedom that anyone can possess: freedom of self, and the freedom for each person to achieve that true self.



Statistics from The National LGBT Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign

Ignorance kills

By: April Lawyer @aplawy

It's been almost a year now since we were first sent home from school to go into quarantine. What many expected to last only two weeks, turned into months. For many of us, it was the first time wearing a face mask of any sort, and the longest we had ever stayed inside. Eventually, September came around, and we were all able to come back to school, with some obvious changes. However, some have objected to these changes.

Time and time again, students (and even teachers) have complained about having to wear masks, practice social distancing, and perform basic human hygiene. Wash hands? Not cough in other people's faces? What crazy demands will be made next!? In all seriousness, it is abhorrent that so many people object to these guidelines that have been set. Especially

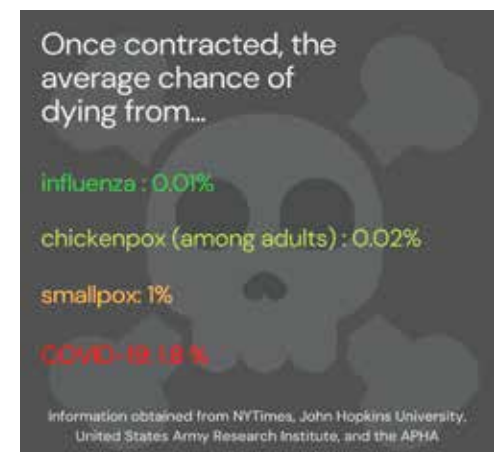
since they have the science to back them up. It's now a well-known fact that COVID-19 can be spread by hitching a ride on airborne droplets, droplets which people expel when they talk, breath, or cough. A mask catches these droplets, preventing them from being breathed in by anyone else, thus decreasing the spread of the virus. All of this information has been made readily available by the CDC. Making sure there is a distance of at least six feet between yourself and others means that if some droplets DO make it past your mask, there is a greater length they have to travel to reach the other person, making infection less likely. Washing hands speaks for itself. You can't spread the virus by touch if the virus has been washed off. Most people learn about germ theory in elementary school, but alas, it seems some never caught on.

So, what happens when these rules are disregarded? Maybe your mask is a bit itchy, you can't put in the effort to stand a bit further away from your

friend, or you just like the smell of your dirty, unwashed hands. People die. That's what happens. And if they don't die, they may have irreversible harm done to them. Now if that still doesn't put you off, know that when there are outbreaks, things start getting canceled. Who could forget when the entirety of the girl's basketball team had to quarantine because of a member getting sick? Or what about the dozen show choir members who had to stay home, making it so that Revelation could not compete in Des Moines? Is it any surprise when so many students post pictures of themselves hanging out with groups of friends while they are completely maskless? When people neglect safety and indulge in ignorance everyone pays the price.

Now that you've tasted some firm words from a realist, I ask you to go out into the world with some consideration as to whether or not you are doing

what you can to keep yourself and others safe. The longer it takes for people to get a grip on the situation at hand, the longer we're going to have to deal with it.



Information obtained from NYTimes, John Hopkins University, United States Army Research Institute, and the APHA