

Ohio GOP wants to follow Trump's lead by declaring 2 sexes, banning DEI in Medicaid

By Haley BeMiller
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Ohio Republicans want to take a page from President Donald Trump and require the state to recognize only two sexes.

House lawmakers unveiled a proposal Tuesday to make that Ohio's official policy and declare the male and female sexes "are not changeable and are grounded in fundamental and incontrovertible reality." The measure was included in the House's [two-year budget plan](#), which will undergo changes by the Ohio Senate and Gov. Mike DeWine before it becomes law.

The GOP-controlled House pitched the idea weeks after Trump [signed executive orders](#) to roll back transgender rights and declare two sexes at the federal level. A separate Ohio law, which [took effect in February](#), prohibits transgender students from using bathrooms that align with their gender identity.

"It conforms with federal law, and it's common sense," Rep. Brian Stewart, R-Ashville, told reporters Tuesday. "We codify that in the law and kind of put this behind us. It's like saying the world is round instead of flat."

The provision is among several conservative social issues tucked into the House budget – most of which target diversity initiatives or LGBTQ rights. The plan also would:

- Define gender identity as "an individual's internal and subjective sense of self, disconnected from biological reality and sex and existing on an infinite continuum, that does not provide a meaningful basis for identification and cannot be recognized as a replacement for sex."
- Require public libraries to place materials related to sexual orientation or gender identity in adult sections.

- Ban state agencies from displaying flags except for the Ohio flag, U.S. flag or POW/MIA flag.
- Prohibit money for youth homelessness from being used on gender-affirming care.
- Ban the Department of Medicaid from paying for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Provide a \$750 income deduction for donations to pregnancy resource centers, which aim to deter people from having an abortion.

Maria Bruno, executive director of the advocacy group Ohioans Against Extremism, called the proposals a distraction from larger issues such as school funding and efforts to cut Medicaid costs.

"We all have to exist in this same state," Bruno said. "We all have different ideas of a lot of different things. But there should be some foundational agreements about things, like leaving people alone."

The House is expected to vote on its budget next week.