



New York's Cooper Union College to Remove Restroom Gender Markings

New York's Cooper Union, a 157-year-old institution that is considered to be one of the most liberal colleges in the country, received worldwide attention after its acting president, Bill Mea, sent an e-mail to the campus on March 18 announcing that the school would remove all signs identifying restrooms as being designated for a specific gender.

"From a practical standpoint, very little will actually change in our day-to-day use of restrooms," Mea wrote, adding, "But it reflects where I believe Cooper Union needs to stand. I cannot change the outside world and how it treats transgender and gender non-conforming people," he continued. "But I can change the Cooper Union environment to help everyone feel safe when they are inside our buildings."

Mea did not explain how giving "transgendered" men (i.e., men who are under the illusion that they are women) free access to restrooms previously reserved for women alone, would make women on campus "feel safe."

The U.S. edition of Britain's *The Guardian* picked up the story and in a March 29 article referred to Cooper Union's new policy as "a pioneering move."

The *Guardian* article quoted Mea, as follows:

When there's a gendered space, there's a sense of ownership to that space. When people see someone who they think doesn't belong there, it can create stress for everyone. So we thought, let's just take that away.

Almost all students and faculty are continuing to use the same bathrooms without issue, Mea told *The Guardian*, adding: "Visitors are figuring it out pretty quickly, too."

An article about the change posted on Cooper Union's website showed pictures of the three types of restroom signs now being used. All three have the designation "RESTROOM" on top but one sign specifies that there are "urinals and stalls" within, another says, "stalls only," and a third says, "single occupancy." The first two specify: "Single-occupancy restroom also located within," giving those who insist upon a modicum of privacy some hope of finding it.

This latest policy change actually amounted to the administration's capitulation to a group of students — whom *The Guardian* described as "agitating for their transgender classmates," when they tore down the signs reading "men" and "women" from the doors of the college Foundation Building's restrooms





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last fall. These budding anarchists, as intent as they were to defend the “rights” of the transgendered, evidently had never been taught anything about the rights of private property owners.

Rather than replace the stolen signs, however, the Cooper Union administration decided to follow the strategy, “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em,” and removed the gender designations from all the restrooms on campus.

The Guardian quoted Rio Sofia, one of the students who put pressure on the administration, as saying, “A public facility shouldn’t have to ask if you’re a man or a woman. It should just ask, ‘do you need to pee or poop?’”

Sofia’s comment ignored the cultural reality that the vast majority of people have long recognized and respected the need for privacy that members of the opposite gender have required when engaged in these very private biological functions.

Cooper Union, officially called The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, is located in Manhattan’s East Village (the eastern part of Greenwich Village), just a few blocks east of the NYU campus. The college was founded by Peter Cooper, a highly successful 19th century industrialist and inventor who designed and built America’s first steam railroad engine.

One would think that an institution of higher education founded by a brilliant inventor would have greater respect for some basic fundamentals of human science, such as those written in a position statement put out by the American College of Pediatricians, on March 21, entitled “Gender Ideology Harms Children.” Among the points made by the authors of the ACPeds statement were:

- “Human sexuality is an objective biological binary trait: ‘XY’ and ‘XX’ are genetic markers of health — not genetic markers of a disorder. The norm for human design is to be conceived either male or female.”
- “No one is born with a gender. Everyone is born with a biological sex. Gender (an awareness and sense of oneself as male or female) is a sociological and psychological concept; not an objective biological one.”
- “A person’s belief that he ... is something [he is] not is, at best, a sign of confused thinking.”

One would think that a prime objective of an institution of higher learning would be to assist students in clarifying their thinking, not to reinforce and enable confused thinking.

We must stress that, as a private institution, Cooper Union has the right to institute its own policies, however misguided they might be. However, those who would use the force of law to impose liberal or progressive policies on other private institutions and businesses (such as forcing the owners of catering companies to accommodate same-sex weddings) must also respect this principle.

An article posted by Townhall.com on March 31 included the recent removal of gender designation marking from restrooms at Cooper Union among [“Five Sure Signs That America Has Gone Mad.”](#)

These five signs of madness are:

1. In New York City, Cooper Union College has decided to remove all “gender markings” from its bathrooms.
2. In Illinois, a Christian businessman has been fined \$80,000 for his faith, and that’s just the beginning.
3. In Wisconsin, a Catholic university has extended the suspension of a tenured professor for expressing



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his commitment to the academic freedom of students to express their Catholic moral values in class.

4. In Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina, two governors and one attorney general reject common sense and religious protections, selling out to political correctness.

5. The NBA has threatened to relocate the 2017 all-star game from Charlotte to another city because North Carolina wants to keep men out of the ladies' rooms, and the governor of New York has forbidden state-related travel to North Carolina.

We especially appreciated writer Michael Brown's concluding sentence:

"God have mercy on America."

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