

GARTRELL

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

February 5, 2025

The Honorable James Comer, Chairman
The Honorable Gerald Connolly, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Connolly:

I write in regards to Ranking Member Connolly's parliamentary inquiry during a hearing on February 5, 2025, which raised concern about the use of the term "tranny" by a member of the House Oversight Hearing on Government Efficiency.¹ In response to the Ranking Member's inquiry, the Chairman said "I am not up to date on my politically correct LBTQIA terms, terminology ... I don't know what's offensive and what's not." The Chairman stated he would need to further consider the matter.²

I am a former congressional staffer who cares deeply about the public's perception of Congress and its proceedings. I hope that this letter provides useful information to the Chairman and his staff regarding the use and meaning of this word. I respectfully request that the letter be (1) included in the record of the February 5th hearing, and (2) given immediate attention since the Committee is scheduled to hold a hearing on transgender-related issues on February 6, 2025.³

As the Committee considers the Ranking Member's inquiry, it should take into account definitions of this word in several popular English language dictionaries and the world's largest internet search engine:

¹ Statements of Representative Mace, Ranking Member Connolly and Chairman Comer, see <https://www.c-span.org/program/house-committee/house-oversight-hearing-on-government-efficiency-part-1/655227>

² *Id.*

³ <https://oversight.house.gov/hearing/subcommittee-on-cybersecurity-information-technology-and-government-innovation-hearing/>

- The American Heritage Dictionary states that the word is “Offensive Slang” for a transgender person.⁴
- Merriam-Webster notes that the noun is a “slang, disparaging + offensive” to describe a transgender person.⁵
- The Cambridge Dictionary’s definition of the word is “an extremely offensive word for a person who is transgender.”⁶
- The Oxford English Dictionary notes that “*tranny* is considered offensive.” (Emphasis in original).⁷
- When the word is entered in a Google search, the definition notes “OFFENSIVE” with a warning symbol.⁸

These definitions demonstrate that the word is widely held to be offensive language. I therefore urge the Chairman to treat the word for what it is—offensive and vulgar slang unbecoming of Congress—and move to strike references to the word from the record, subject to Rule XVII(4)(a) of the Rules of the House of Representatives. Going forward, I further urge the Chairman to encourage Members to use more respectful language that has been used for decades. The word “transgender” was first used by researchers in the 1960s, and transsexuality has been a recognized—and billable—medical diagnosis for more than three decades.⁹

Republicans and Democrats may differ on policy toward and involving transgender people. Regardless, the fact remains that more than 1.6 million people in the United States identify as transgender, and they deserve respect as much as any other human being.¹⁰ According to the Mayo Clinic, transgender people are vulnerable to social stigma, discrimination, abuse, harassment, neglect, rejection and unfair treatment. They also are at higher risk of emotional and psychological abuse, physical and sexual violence,

⁴ <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=tranny&submit.x=56&submit.y=18>

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tranny>

⁶ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/tranny>

⁷ https://www.oed.com/dictionary/tranny_n3?tl=true&tab=factsheet

⁸ <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=tranny&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

⁹ American Psychiatric Association, Gender Dysphoria Diagnosis, see <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/diversity/education/transgender-and-gender-nonconforming-patients/gender-dysphoria-diagnosis>

¹⁰ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-adults-united-states/>

substance misuse and mental health problems, including thoughts of suicide.¹¹

Given the challenges transgender people face in day-to-day life, and the Chairman's deeply held Christian values, I hope that he takes into account Jesus Christ's words from the Book of Matthew:

- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth (5:5)
- In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets (5:12)

The Committee is a role model for our country. As its current steward, the Chairman has an institutional responsibility to ensure the Committee is delivering a message that encourages Americans to treat each other with dignity and respect. In the same way that I am certain the Chairman would condemn a member calling a Black person "n****r," or a Jewish person "k***," I hope he will not tolerate the future use of "t****" to refer to transgender people.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our country.

Respectfully,

Peter Gartrell
President and Founder
Gartrell Public Affairs

¹¹ <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/transgender-health/art-20154721>