

Willamette Week

Will Banning Government Travel to North Carolina Do Any Good?

By Aaron Mesh

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Portland leaders have responded with outrage to a North Carolina law that requires transgender people to use the bathroom that matches the gender on their birth certificates.

In the past three weeks, as WW reported, the city of Portland and Portland Public Schools have both banned travel for public officials on government business to North Carolina.

But one local law professor questions whether those bans are productive.

Nathan Christensen, an adjunct professor at Lewis & Clark Law School, wrote an op-ed Friday in the Washington Post. He argues that travel bans—like the one put in place by Portland Mayor Charlie Hales for city employees—have the correct goal but the wrong approach.

"Not only do the travel bans potentially send us down a slippery slope, but also they are blunt instruments that could halt progress in other areas," Christensen writes.

"Cities and states collaborate on many issues, from urban planning to public education," he continues. "What would happen to this collaboration if their officials were not allowed to meet? Should city planners in Seattle be stopped from visiting a green building project in Charlotte?"

Read [the full op-ed here](#).