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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

MATT GALLIVAN, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
WARREN GUNNELS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

www.help.senate.gov

August 11, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Director Kristen Mark
Eli Coleman Institute for Sexual
and Gender Health
1300 South 2nd Street, Suite 180
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Director Mark,

Americans expect taxpayer-supported institutions to prioritize rigorous medical research and evidence-based care, not projects that encourage children as young as four to question the reality of biological sex. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) and as a physician, I write to express my deep concern regarding the development, funding, and promotion of the MyGender Dolls, a recent project affiliated with the University of Minnesota Medical School's Eli Coleman Institute for Sexual and Gender Health.¹

According to the Institute's 2024 Annual Report, the project was developed in six years with "generous grant and donation support."² The report states that the project is now being expanded into broader clinical settings. The MyGender Dolls website describes the dolls as "grounded in gender-affirming clinical practices" intended as a "therapeutic" resource for "gender diverse children ages 4–10."³ The website further states that they are designed for use by mental health providers, school counselors, educators, pediatricians, and allied health professionals.⁴

The University of Minnesota previously maintained a webpage describing the MyGender Dolls project, although that page has since been removed. According to the archived webpage, the dolls are modeled after "classic paper dolls," allowing children to "select bodies, genitals, clothes, and

¹ *MyGender Dolls*, Nat'l Ctr. for Gender Spectrum Health, Univ. of Minn. Med. Sch., <https://med.umn.edu/sexualhealth/ncgsh/projects/mygender-dolls>, archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20241218114712/https://med.umn.edu/sexualhealth/ncgsh/projects/mygender-dolls> (Dec. 18, 2024).

² Gabrielle Fahmy, *Taxpayer-funded trans dolls with removable genitalia to hit classrooms this fall for kids as young as 4 to 'learn about different options'*, N.Y. Post, (July 25, 2026) <https://nypost.com/2026/07/25/us-news/taxpayer-funded-transgender-dolls-to-hit-classrooms-this-fall/>.

³ *MyGender Dolls*, MyGender Dolls, <https://mygenderdolls.com/#about> (last visited Aug. 4, 2026).

⁴ *Id.*

other accessories as a way to visualize their anatomy and genders.”⁵ Children can also choose external genitalia and internal reproductive organs to demonstrate “that their gender identity is valid no matter what parts they have.”⁶

Although the MyGender Dolls website indicates the dolls will launch in 2026, prototype versions have already been used with children in clinical settings.⁷ In a March 2020 article published by the University of Minnesota’s Discovery Magazine, therapist Elizabeth Panetta, MSW, described the dolls as a valuable tool in her work with children, stating: “We were able to explore and brainstorm not just what our bodies are able to do now but what we want our bodies to do and look like in the future.”⁸

The use of dolls featuring interchangeable genitalia and reproductive organs with children as young as four, particularly to encourage discussions about chemical and surgical interventions to their bodies, is extremely concerning and is inconsistent with federal directives.

Specifically, the University of Minnesota’s development and promotion of the MyGender Dolls conflicts with President Trump’s Executive Order (EO) 14190, *Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling*,⁹ which prohibits the use of federal funds to promote gender ideology among young and developing children. Although University officials have stated that the dolls were “solely funded by private donations,” the Institute acknowledges receiving millions of dollars in state and federal funding for its research.¹⁰ Moreover, the project later received awards through university commercialization programs with federal connections, raising additional questions about whether federal resources directly or indirectly supported its development.

In 2024, the project received a cash prize through the University’s MIN-Corps program, which provides awards of up to \$3,000 and operates as part of the Great Lakes I-Corps Hub, supported by grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF).¹¹ According to the NSF, the I-Corps program has received approximately \$16 million in federal funding.¹² The project also received

⁵ *MyGender Dolls*, Nat’l Ctr. for Gender Spectrum Health, Univ. of Minn. Med. Sch., <https://med.umn.edu/sexualhealth/ncgsh/projects/mygender-dolls>, archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20241218114712/https://med.umn.edu/sexualhealth/ncgsh/projects/mygender-dolls> (Dec. 18, 2024).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Exec. Order No. 14,190, *Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling*, 90 Fed. Reg. 8853 (Feb. 3, 2025).

¹⁰ Eli Coleman Institute for Sexual and Gender Health, <https://med.umn.edu/sexualhealth> <https://med.umn.edu/sexualhealth> (last visited Aug. 8, 2026).

¹¹ MIN-Corps, Univ. of Minn., <https://mincorps.umn.edu/> (last visited Aug. 4, 2026).

¹² Nat’l Sci. Found., Award Abstract #2048612, *NSF I-Corps Hub: Great Lakes Region*, https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/show-award/?AWD_ID=2048612&HistoricalAwards=false (last visited Aug. 4, 2026).

funding from the University's Early Innovation Fund, which provides grants of up to \$10,000 to help advance early-stage innovations, including supporting the development of prototypes.¹³

The promotion of the MyGender Dolls for use by school counselors and educators also raises potential concerns under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).¹⁴ The PPRA protects parents' rights in federally funded educational programs involving sensitive matters, such as "sex behavior and attitudes."¹⁵ To the extent these dolls are used in educational settings by teachers, counselors, or other school personnel to facilitate discussions about physically changing children's bodies, gender identity, or related topics, their use may raise questions regarding compliance with the PPRA's parental rights protections.

Taken together, these facts raise substantial questions regarding whether federally supported resources directly or indirectly benefited the development, promotion, or commercialization of the MyGender Dolls project and whether the University complied with applicable federal requirements. The possibility that federal funding was used to promote gender ideology among children as young as four is alarming and demands full transparency. Accordingly, please respond to the following questions, on a question-by-question basis, no later than **August 25, 2026**.

1. Please identify all sources of funding, financial support, or in-kind contributions received in connection with the MyGender Dolls project from its inception through the present, including but not limited to federal grants, state appropriations, University funds, private donations, foundation grants, crowdfunding, and any other financial support.
 - a. Please provide this information in Excel spreadsheet format identifying the funding source, amount received, date received, funding mechanism (grant, donation, prize, contract, etc.) and intended purpose.
 - b. Please identify all University personnel, facilities, offices, equipment, technology, administrative support, legal services or any other institutional resources used in connection with the MyGender Dolls project, whether funded directly or indirectly by the University.
2. Please provide a chronological timeline identifying and describing the research, University approvals, testing, commercialization activities (*e.g.*, intellectual property filings), promotional materials, and public announcements during the project's six-year development.

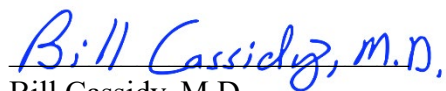
¹³ *Past Early Innovation Awards*, Univ. of Minn. Rsch. & Innovation Off., Tech. Commercialization, <https://research.umn.edu/units/techcomm/university-inventors/innovation-investments/past-awards> (last visited Aug. 6, 2026).

¹⁴ 20 U.S. Code § 1232h.

¹⁵ *Id.*

3. Please provide all records relating to MyGender Dolls' participation in MIN-Corps, the Technology Commercialization Office, the Early Innovation Fund, the Great Lakes I-Corps Hub, or any other University commercialization initiative.
 - a. Please also provide all applications, awards, and supporting documents submitted in connection with these programs.
4. Please describe all research conducted in connection with the MyGender Dolls project, including pilot studies, surveys, interviews, and any other research activities.
 - a. Identify the project's original research objectives.
 - b. Please describe the methodology used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and its goals.
 - c. Please identify all published or unpublished research resulting from the project and identify the funding source(s) supporting each research activity and resulting publication.
5. Please describe the University's review of the MyGender Dolls project for compliance with applicable federal laws, federal grant requirements, executive branch directives, and University policies governing federally funded research and educational programming.
 - a. Please provide all legal, compliance, ethics, or policy reviews conducted in connection with this project.
6. Please provide all communications between the University or any project personnel and any federal agency concerning the MyGender Dolls project, including but not limited to communications regarding funding, grants, research, commercialization, and regulatory compliance.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Bill Cassidy, M.D. in blue ink.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Chairman

U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions

