

State Department to leave `mother' and `father' on documents

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WASHINGTON (RNS) Facing a backlash from conservative groups, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has ordered changes to a proposal to remove the terms "mother" and "father" from records of overseas births.

"With Secretary Clinton's input, we will be revising the form to retain the existing designation of mother and father, in addition to the designation of parent," said Rosemary Macray, a spokeswoman for the department's Bureau of Consular Affairs.

The department had announced plans on Dec. 22 to change the Consular Report of Birth Abroad to "use the title of `parent' as opposed to `mother' and `father.'"

"These improvements are being made to provide a gender-neutral description of a child's parents and in recognition of different types of families," it said at the time.

But after conservative Christian groups criticized the proposed change on Friday (Jan. 7), Clinton issued new directives on Saturday.

"Only in the topsy-turvy world of left-wing political correctness could it be considered an `improvement' for a birth-related document to provide less information about the circumstances of that birth," said

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council in a Friday statement.

Macray said the specific language, which was still being revised, would be included in the overseas birth records as well as applications for passports for children and first-time adult applicants.