

What They're Saying: Trump's Ban on Transgender Troops

Trump's Despicable Ban on Transgender Military Service Meets Widespread, Bipartisan Derision

Over the last 24 hours, Donald Trump's dangerous and unpatriotic decision to reinstate a ban on qualified transgender troops in the military has met with widespread, bipartisan criticism. His reprehensible action could result in the discharge of more than 15,000 transgender Americans currently serving our country at a critical time. A look at the headlines and leaders across business, government, the military and others taking a stand against Trump's ban on transgender troops bravely serving their country:

Editorial boards and leading columnists agree...

[**Los Angeles Times Editorial Board: Trump's transgender tweet wasn't just the usual morning rant; it's dangerously bad policy.**](#) "In the pantheon of Donald Trump tweets, his three-part missive Wednesday morning declaring that transgender people would not be allowed in the military was not his most rude, mindless or irrational. But it is deeply troubling nevertheless. He essentially called for a step backward in time that goes counter to all the slow but necessary progress the United States has made in recent years in its treatment of transgender people."

[**Washington Post: Trump said transgender troops cause 'disruption.' These 18 militaries show otherwise. By Amanda Erickson.**](#) "Last year, the Pentagon lifted its long-standing ban on transgender men and women serving openly in the military. At the time, Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter explained: 'Our mission is to defend this country, and we don't want barriers unrelated to a person's qualification to serve preventing us from recruiting. ... We have to have access to 100 percent of America's population for our all-volunteer force to be able to recruit from among them the most highly qualified.' That plan, studied extensively, was meant to be fully implemented by July 1. This morning, President Trump reversed that policy."

[**Military Times: Transgender airman: 'I would like to see them try to kick me out of my military'. By Stephen Losey.**](#) "A Marine military police officer who is a transgender man (he asked that his name not be used), pointed out that he's served honorably through two deployments. He's never endangered his comrades, he said, or made anyone else 'conform to my world view.' All he asked for, he said, was the same respect he gave others."

[**The Washington Post: Trump Punishes Transgender Patriots, By Andrew Rosenthal.**](#) "There is no evidence that allowing transgender people to serve openly in uniform would interfere with the "decisive and overwhelming victory" that Trump fantasizes about. Estimates of the number of transgender service members range from about 2,500 to about 15,500, most of whom have not revealed their gender identity. There are far more gay men and women in uniform and their presence did not in any way disrupt American military power before or after the "don't ask, don't tell" policy was repealed."

[**The Washington Post: Trump's military transgender ban? It's an attack on the whole LGBT community. By Steven Petrow.**](#) "Out of the blue, with no new data and the same team of generals, President Trump has decided that he wants to reinstate the ban on transgender people in the military,

reversing Obama administration regulations allowing all men and women, regardless of gender identity, to serve their country. This is the same man who, when running for office, claimed to be a friend of the LGBT community. Perhaps he's forgotten that the "T" stands for "transgender." Make no mistake, the president's anti-transgender offensive is an attack on the entire LGBT community and on our core American belief in equality of opportunity."

[TIME: Why the Transgender Troop Ban May Backfire Politically.](#) "Drawing the military into this fight may, in fact, backfire. Few institutions in America retain as broad a confidence as the armed forces. Members of the military—straight or gay, cisgender or transgender, male or female—are among the most respected members of their communities. Telling those already in uniform that they are unfit can be seen as an insult to not just those individuals, but those who serve with them and their families. And an outright ban on service will create thousands of camera-ready victims."

Republican and Democratic elected leaders agree...

[Senator John McCain \(D-AZ\).](#) "The statement was unclear. The Department of Defense has already decided to allow currently-serving transgender individuals to stay in the military, and many are serving honorably today. Any American who meets current medical and readiness standards should be allowed to continue serving. There is no reason to force servicemembers who are able to fight, train and deploy to leave the military -- regardless of their gender identity. We should all be guided by the principle that any American who wants to serve our country and is able to meet the standards should have the opportunity to do so -- and should be treated as the patriots they are."

[Senator Joni Ernst \(R-IA\).](#) "Americans who are qualified and can meet the standards to serve in the military should be afforded that opportunity."

[Senator Orrin Hatch \(R-UT\).](#) 1) "I don't think we should be discriminating against anyone. Transgender people are people, and deserve the best we can do for them. I look forward to getting much more information and clarity for our military leaders about the policy the President tweeted today." 2) "[They don't choose to be transgender](#), they're born that way. Why should we hold that against them? They're human beings and many of them are extremely talented human beings. We should be open to everybody?"

[Senator Heidi Heitkamp \(D-ND\).](#) "We need to honor -not shame- the men/women who serve our country. The president banning transgender Americans from serving is upsetting"

[Senator Thom Tillis \(R-NC\).](#) "I would have significant objections to any proposal that calls for a specific group of American patriots currently serving in uniform to be removed from the military."

[Senator Dan Sullivan \(R-AK\).](#) "I'm all about training standards. High, high standards for whoever joins the military. But my initial reaction is, if you can meet those standards, we shouldn't care who you are. So, meet the standards, and you should be able to join the military."

[Senator Richard Shelby \(R-AL\).](#) "We are a nation at war. I am confident that Secretary Mattis and DoD leadership can and will evaluate current personnel policy that will enable us to recruit, train, and equip an all-volunteer force. Any American who wants to serve our country and is able to meet those standards

should have the opportunity to do so.”

Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA). “This is discrimination plain and simple. I stand with the brave transgender Americans who selflessly serve our military.

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME). “Our armed forces should welcome the service of any qualified individual who is willing and capable of serving our country.”

Senator Cory Gardner (D-CO). “Anyone who wants to serve in our military and is capable and willing should be able to do so.”

Senator Robert Casey Jr. (D-PA). “Americans willing to serve our nation in the military should be judged on their ability to do the job, not their gender identity,” Casey said in a statement provided by his spokeswoman. “Prohibiting qualified, capable people from serving in our nation’s military because of who they are makes our nation less safe.”

Senator Patrick Toomey (R-PA). “Department of Defense personnel decisions should be based entirely on maximizing the Armed Forces’ ability to protect and defend the American people,” Toomey spokesman Steve Kelly said, adding that the senator “has supported measures to protect individuals from discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.”

Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). “I stand with military leaders who support moving in the right direction. We shouldn’t discriminate against anyone who wants to serve. To those transgender Americans currently in the U.S. military, thank you. Your service strengthens our military and our nation.”

Senator Joe Donnelly (D-IN). “When the stakes are as high as the safety and security of the United States, we should always have an open door for the best, most talented patriots. Military service should be about abilities, integrity, and performance, and I agree with my Republican colleague Sen. Shelby that everybody should be treated fairly and given a chance to serve.”

Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO). “What he said ↓ ➡” sharing Sen. McCain’s statement.”

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH). “All who serve in our military deserve our gratitude & respect. We should not turn away people who are willing & able to serve this country.”

Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV). “I agree with Senator McCain that ‘any American who wants to serve our country and is able to meet the standards should have the opportunity to do so — and should be treated as the patriots they are.’”

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). “I was one who said that those who are openly gay should not be denied the opportunity to serve our country and I feel the same way about transgender.”

Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL). “All those who meet the military’s qualifications should be able to serve.”

Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI). “I think any law-abiding American who wants to serve the nation should be able to.”

Senator Rob Portman (R-OH). “We should not turn anyone away who is willing and able to serve our country, period,” he said. “The president’s wrong.”

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). “It is a cruel and arbitrary decision designed to humiliate transgender Americans who stepped forward to serve our country. A study commissioned by the Department of Defense found that the cost of providing medically necessary transition-related care would be a paltry 2 to 8 million dollars per year – one one-hundredth of one percent of the military’s nearly \$50 billion health care budget.”

Congressman Charlie Dent (R-PA). “Americans who are willing & able should be allowed to serve U.S. regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity”

Congressman Joe Kennedy (D-MA). “Today the President of our United States looked American soldiers in the eye and dared to question their patriotism – their courage. He doubted their commitment to their brothers and sisters in uniform. He said that our military couldn’t or wouldn’t stand for all of us. To the thousands of brave transgender men and women serving today: please know that this grateful nation does not take your service and your patriotism for granted. You deserve better from your president. You deserve better from your country.”

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL). “No American, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity, should be prohibited from honor + privilege of serving our nation #LGBT”

Congressman Frank Lobiondo (R-NJ). “Removing thousands of men and women from admirably and honorably serving is counterintuitive to strengthening our military. I have serious concerns about what this new directive means for current active duty and reserve transgender members of our Armed Forces and National Guard. I expect Defense Secretary Mattis to provide clarity on this issue and determine what is in the best interest of military readiness to protect our nation.”

Congressman Ken Buck (R-CO). “America needs a military comprised of patriots willing to sacrifice for this country. Any American who is physically and emotionally qualified should be allowed to serve.”

Congressman Scott Taylor (R-VA). “ There are heroic military members willing to put their lives on the line and give the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf, regardless of their gender identity. I support the ability for those who meet all military requirements, medical and otherwise, to have the opportunity to serve our great country.”

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. “Nearly 70 years ago today, President Truman signed an executive order to desegregate the military of the United States -- a major step forward for equality in our society. In stark contrast, the Trump Administration's directive barring transgender members of the military is wrong, intolerant and a giant slide backwards in the fight for equal rights. Valor knows no race, no creed, no gender, and no sexual identity, period. No matter who you are, New York will always fight for your rights to live freely and without discrimination. We stand united with the transgender community against those who seek to drive us apart.”

Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy. “The Trump Administration and Attorney General Sessions are now blatantly going out of their way to divide Americans and legalize discrimination in our country,” Governor Malloy said. “We are stepping into an era where a presidential administration is clearly trying to separate people and the civil rights that they are allowed to have based on who they are, and that is

shameful. The last century of American history has been noted for numerous steps forward in righting the wrongs that had separated our country for too long, and it is appalling that those in authority are now actively seeking to move the clock on equality and justice backwards. Those in leadership positions throughout our nation should be doing everything they can to unite our country and protect the civil rights of all people, not actively seeking to divide hardworking, patriotic Americans.”

More [here](#).

Military leaders agree...

[Former Defense Secretary Ash Carter](#). “Quality people in uniform are what make our military the finest fighting force the world has ever seen. I continue to maintain that what matters in choosing those who serve is that they are best qualified. To choose service members on other grounds than military qualifications is social policy and has no place in our military. There are already transgender individuals who are serving capably and honorably. This action would also send the wrong signal to a younger generation thinking about military service.”

[Former Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning](#). “I was shocked that the commander-in-chief would turn his back on thousands of patriotic Americans who are serving today.”

[18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Marty Dempsey](#). “The service of men and women who volunteer and who meet our standards of service is a blessing not a burden
#InclusionMakesUsStronger.”

[Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen](#). “I led our armed forces under the flawed ‘Don’t ask, Don’t tell’ policy and saw firsthand the harm to readiness and morale when we fail to treat all service members according to the same standards. Thousands of transgender Americans are currently serving in uniform and there is no reason to single out these brave men and women and deny them the medical care that they require.”

Business leaders agree...

[Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey](#). “Discrimination in any form is wrong for all of us #LetThemServe”

[Microsoft President and Chief Legal Officer Brad Smith](#). “We honor and respect all who serve, including the transgender members of our military. #LetThemServe”

[Ben & Jerry’s](#). “Discrimination against anyone regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identify is un-American. #ProtectTransTroops”

[Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg](#). “Everyone should be able to serve their country -- no matter who they are.”

[Google CEO Sundar Pichai](#). “I am grateful to the transgender members of the military for their service. #LetThemServe.”

[Apple CEO Tim Cook](#). “We are indebted to all who serve. Discrimination against anyone holds everyone back. #LetThemServe”

[Salesforce](#): “Salesforce believes in equality for all. We support and thank all U.S. service members, including transgender Americans”

[Intel CEO Brian Krzanich](#). “Discrimination is wrong. Diversity makes ALL organizations better. #LetThemServe”

[Veteran entrepreneur Max Levchin](#). “Trans kids, soldiers etc need our support today and to know they are valued & respected regardless of politics. Let us not be divided.”

[Uber](#). “We owe the deepest debt of gratitude to all those who volunteer to serve in the US Armed Forces and defend our values,” the company said in a statement to Axios. “These patriotic Americans deserve to be honored and respected, not turned away because of who they are.”

Major medical associations agree...

[American Medical Association](#). “There is no medically valid reason to exclude transgender individuals from military service. Transgender individuals are serving their country with honor, and they should be allowed to continue doing so. AMA policy also supports public and private health insurance coverage for treatment of gender dysphoria as recommended by the patient's physician. According to the Rand study on the impact of transgender individuals in the military, the financial cost is a rounding error in the defense budget and should not be used as an excuse to deny patriotic Americans an opportunity to serve their country. We should be honoring their service - not trying to end it.”

[American Psychological Association](#). “The American Psychological Association questions the reasoning behind President Trump’s call to bar transgender people from the military. We’ve seen no scientific evidence that allowing transgender people to serve in the armed forces has had an adverse impact on our military readiness or unit cohesion. Therefore, we ask that transgender individuals continue to be allowed to serve their country.”

Celebrities agree...

[Katy Perry](#). “ALL those who defend our right to live freely should be able to serve freely! There are THOUSANDS currently serving! #ProtectTransTroops”

[Ellen DeGeneres](#). “We should be grateful to the people who wish to serve, not turn our backs on them. Banning transgender people is hurtful, baseless and wrong”

[Demi Lovato](#). “I just want to tell the transgender community that I love you and you ARE supported no matter what. #ProtectTransTroops.”

[George Takei](#). “Donald certainly loves regulations when they serve to ban or exclude people. Bc he governs by fear & exclusion rather than hope & inclusion.”

Laverne Cox. “My fellow trans Americans despite what some may say your existence is valuable. Your lives, safety, & service matter. #TransIsBeautiful To all the trans folks currently serving in the military thank you for your service. I am sorry your "commander in chief" doesn't value it. Marginalized folks have often found ourselves at odds with systems which seek to subjugate & erase us. Let us love each other more & fight.”

Cole Sprouse. “Don't let @realDonaldTrump, who's spent his life avoiding armed combat, try and define the image of bravery. #TransRightsAreHumanRights”

Lena Dunham. “Hey trans teens: this man does not represent the overwhelming love, support and pride waiting for you when you step out into the world.”

Janet Mock. “There are many ways to serve our communities/countries. Trans folk have done vital work, putting bodies on the line unlike @realDonaldTrump.”