

Talking Points on the Ban on Transgender Servicemembers

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These messages were developed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD Law).

KEY MESSAGES

- Anyone who meets the standards should be able to serve. There are already thousands of transgender service members currently in the military who have met the standards and more than proven themselves.
- Banning service members who have served our country hurts readiness by creating gaps in critical positions and increasing the burden on all service members. Retaining talented service members—rather than discharging them—strengthens our military readiness.
- The United States military is tasked with defending our country and protecting all Americans. Banning qualified people from serving our country puts us all at greater risk.
- Banning people who meet rigorous service standards simply because of who they are is completely contrary to the core military value—that what matters in the military is being able to do the job. When you put on the uniform, differences drop away, and the focus is on completing the shared mission.
- Transgender people are our friends, neighbors, and coworkers. They are veterans who have served with honor, and active duty service members who have sacrificed to protect our freedoms. Transgender service members, like all our troops, should be judged for their qualifications—nothing more, nothing less.

WHAT NOT TO SAY

- **Don't reference the often-used metric that there are 15,000 transgender members of the military**, which vastly overstates the number of transgender service members and could have unintended consequences legally as well.
- **Don't say there is a recruitment crisis or that the military is having a hard time recruiting members.** This was true for some time, but it is no longer true, and it has now become a right-wing talking point. Additionally, even if the military was having a recruiting crisis, they simply are not enough transgender people to make any significant difference.
- **Don't focus on harms to transgender troops.** Instead, focus on how banning transgender service members harms our military readiness, military values, and the mission.

Below is a high level reminder of effective values frames when talking about issues impacting transgender people:

No matter the attack or vehicle, our shared values include:

- Supporting individual freedom
- Supporting parental freedom
- Opposing government overreach / interference

We want to protect the rights and freedoms of:

- All people
- Parents and Families
- Doctors and Medical Professionals