

[IAVA Praises Department of Defense \(DoD\) Lift of Transgender Ban For Military Members](#)

Post 9/11 Vets recommended review of DoD stance in recent policy agenda

Washington, DC (June 30, 2016) – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) issued the following statement in [reaction to the Department of Defense \(DoD\)](#) announcement, effective immediately, allowing transgender individuals to serve openly without threat of discharge. This far reaching policy change allows those currently serving to come forward immediately to be assessed for medical treatment. As the leading post-9/11 veterans empowerment organization, IAVA advocated for the DoD to study the impact of this policy change on mission readiness in its [2015 policy agenda](#).

“There are an estimated 2,500 Active Duty and 1,500 Reserve transgender troops in the military and over 134,000 transgender veterans – these individuals up until today served in anonymity,” said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). “This policy decision prioritizes the effectiveness of the force over politics – something IAVA has always advocated for. IAVA will continue to lead to ensure LGBT service members are treated with the same dignity and respect afforded to all members of the military. IAVA commends Secretary Carter and the Department of Defense’s decision to lift the ban on transgender members in the military.”

IAVA supported the repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell (DADT), the overturning of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) as well as the continued expansion of the role of women in the military, including the recent policy change to open combat MOS positions to women. In 2010, IAVA supported the repeal of DADT amidst concern that this repeal would negatively impact mission readiness. According to IAVA’s most recent [member survey](#), 80 percent of respondents feel that this repeal had a neutral or positive impact on mission readiness.

“Equality is good for our military and for service,” continued Rieckhoff. “Every able-bodied American who wants to serve our country in a time of war should be able to do so. The wider the pool of applicants, the better our force will be.”

IAVA commends DoD in continuing to embrace equality in service. With this announcement, the U.S. joins 18 other nations in allowing open transgender service without negative consequences. We encourage the DoD and all branches of the armed services to work together to thoughtfully implement this policy change and raise awareness among troops to ensure full buy-in.