

Trump's Transgender Ban in Military Vigorously Opposed by Veterans

NEW YORK, NY (July 26, 2017) – Today, following tweets from President Trump declaring a ban on transgender people serving in the military, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) released the following statement:

“This is backward, harmful and contrary to American values. It’s also bad for national security. Thousands of transgender troops are serving in our military right now. An unknown number are in combat zones today. This shocking statement undermines an unknown number of active duty troops, who have just been told by their Commander-in-Chief that they are banned from serving. In an era when so few people step up to serve, no American who is willing and able to wear the uniform should be turned away. Equality is a force-multiplier for our military,” **said Paul Rieckhoff, IAVA CEO and Founder.**

“Don’t believe the spin or scare-mongering. Diversity makes our national security stronger and the facts back it up. [Studies](#) have confirmed that transgender troops are not only serving, but that their open service does nothing to harm readiness,” **continued Rieckhoff.**

IAVA stands in support of our transgender troops and veterans—and in support of equality always. As a next-generation veteran empowerment, advocacy and support organization, IAVA is proud of its record of standing, often alone, on the right side of equality issues. We’ve fought for historic change within the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Defense (DoD). [IAVA supported the June 2016 announcement by DoD](#) to allow transgender troops to serve openly without threat of discharge, and has called for an expansion of rights and services for LGBT troops, veterans and their families. IAVA was also the only national Veteran Service Organization to support the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT). Similarly, IAVA led the veteran community in endorsing the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

IAVA will continue fighting to ensure that our nation maintains the best and most qualified force possible and that all veterans are properly honored by our nation and served by the VA. IAVA’s platform on promoting equality for all troops and veterans can be found on page 67 of our Policy Agenda [here](#).

In addition to IAVA, numerous veterans and military leaders have come out against the President’s decision, including Senator and Post-9/11 veteran [Joni Ernst](#), Senator [John McCain](#), Former Secretary of Defense [Ash Carter](#) and Senator and Iraq War Veteran [Tammy Duckworth](#).