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June 10, 2016

The Honorable Ashton B. Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Carter:

I write in support of the decision to repeal the Department of Defense's (DOD) outdated policy prohibiting transgender individuals from openly serving in the military and I urge expeditious implementation of this policy change. I have long fought to ensure that our military is inclusive and I stand ready to work with you to carry out these important changes.

It is critical that our nation guard against discrimination and promote inclusiveness, particularly in our most respected public institutions, while protecting the rights of all individuals regardless of their gender identity. Today, there are dozens of transgender troops who have bravely come forward about their identity, and countless more who are still waiting to do so. These service members deserve clarity and the ability to do their jobs without the stress caused by obsolete policies.

Transgender personnel serve in some of our nation's most essential national security agencies and in 18 foreign militaries, including close allies and those who have fought alongside U.S. forces; such the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Israel. Removing these outdated regulations will only strengthen our armed forces and provide for greater cohesion and unity. Research conducted by retired Flag and General Officers and the RAND Corporation has determined that repeal will help—not hurt—readiness by enabling commanders to better care for their troops and provide necessary health and other pertinent services to members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

It is time to end the ban on transgender individuals from serving in our military; doing so will allow the armed forces to better realize the full potential of all service members and make our nation safer and stronger.

I look forward to working with you to swiftly implement the repeal of this prohibition.

Sincerely,

Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee

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