

October 31, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-329, The Capitol
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Whip
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
Majority Whip
S-208, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders:

We, the undersigned, represent hundreds of thousands of Americans, and want to thank you for your commitment to a strong, capable military. As you are aware, in June, the Department of Defense issued an Instruction (“DODI”) on the service of persons who identify as transgender. This DODI is an affront to the American people and is certain to undermine readiness, recruitment, and retention in the military. Thus, we urge you to halt the implementation of the DODI through the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017* (H.R. 4909, “NDAA”).

The DODI implies that a person can become stable in a gender that is contrary to the person’s sex. However, Lawrence Meyer, Ph.D., and Paul McHugh, M.D., have reported that “adults who have undergone sex-reassignment surgery continue to have a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes,” indicating it is not possible to become stable in a gender that is inconsistent with one’s sex. Even the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (“CMS”) recently declined to provide a National Coverage Determination for gender reassignment surgery citing an insufficiency of evidence regarding any positive health outcomes from gender reassignment surgery, and called for additional studies on the subject. In fact, studies have shown that people who attempt to transition from one gender to the other experience high rates of suicide ideation, depression, and other mental health risks. These need to be treated, not ignored by paying for sex reassignment surgeries that have not been shown to address the underlying mental health concerns of people struggling with gender identity dysphoria.

Despite these facts, the Department of Defense pushed forward a social engineering experiment in gender transition that “begins when a Service member receives a diagnosis from a military medical provider indicating that gender transition is medically necessary, and concludes when... the member is recognized in the preferred gender. At that point, the Service member will be responsible for meeting all applicable military standards in the preferred gender, and ... will use those berthing, bathroom, and shower facilities associated with the preferred gender.” These changes create privacy and safety concerns with regard to these intimate spaces, as the DOD does not require a member’s anatomy to reflect his or her preferred gender before allowing the member into his or her preferred shower and sleeping facilities.

Religious freedom and matters of conscience are also a serious concern. The DODI failed to ensure people of faith would be able to exercise their consciences by diagnosing, counseling, or otherwise affirming a member's gender identity dysphoria. In fact, the DODI is silent on the issue of how the freedom to believe is implicated and undermined by the DODI.

While people who struggle with gender identity dysphoria deserve our compassion, the military serves a distinct purpose, which is undermined by allowing members with gender identity dysphoria to serve in the military. The inherent privacy, safety, and readiness problems with the DODI are exacerbated by forcing the American taxpayer to fund gender transition treatments and sensitivity training, rather than military needs. We strongly urge you to address this issue in this year's NDAA to halt the implementation of the DODI. Again, we appreciate your commitment to prioritizing readiness, recruitment, retention, and morale for our Armed Services.

Sincerely,

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