

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

As Members of Congress, we write to you to express our deep concerns about your recent memo and the executive order targeting members of the Armed Forces who are transgender. Any American who currently does – or can in the future – meet the standards required of military service should have the opportunity to serve. And in an all-volunteer force, transgender Americans serve at twice the rate of the general population and have proven that they are more than up to the challenge. **Therefore, we ask you to rescind your memo and to urge President Trump to withdraw Executive Order 14183 that bans transgender people from serving in the military and negatively impacts the lethality of our Armed Forces.**

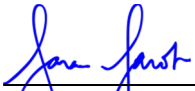
In your first letter to the force as Secretary, you committed to supporting all our service members. You stated, *“Just as my fellow soldiers had my back on the battlefield, know that I will always have your back. We serve together at a dangerous time. Our enemies will neither rest nor relent. And neither will we. We will stand shoulder to shoulder to meet the urgency of this moment. Like each of you, I love my country and swore an oath to defend the Constitution. We will do that each and every day, as one team.”* With the release of your memo, your promise has been negated for the thousands of transgender service members and their families — many of whom have been serving openly for nearly a decade.

These troops have been serving with courage, honor, and effectiveness in every theater across the globe, including combat deployments. Their service has been recognized with countless commendations and awards. As you know, any service member who remains undeployable for 12 months may not continue serving regardless of the reason. Transgender service members are already held to that standard.


Replacing the level of expertise of the 73% of transgender personnel who are senior enlisted and have extensive experience would cost billions of dollars and take up to 20 years. They are deployed today in units, and are combat-ready. Deeming a fully qualified service member as unfit for service simply because of their identity is in opposition to the values of a meritocratic all-volunteer force that depends on the willingness of capable patriots. This policy will further alienate the current military-age generation, of which a far larger portion openly identify as LGBTQ+ — people who the military needs to volunteer to be our future warfighters.

Banning transgender individuals from serving in the military, including discharging those currently in uniform, would be detrimental to our military readiness and retention, and we implore you to rescind your memo and urge President Trump to withdraw this executive order to protect the lethality of our Armed Forces.

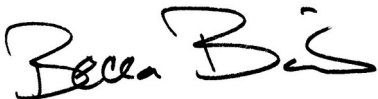
Sincerely,




Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress




Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



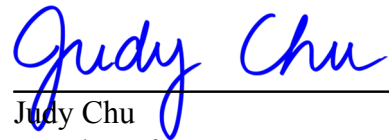
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



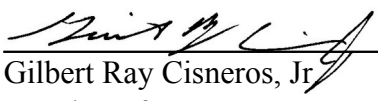
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



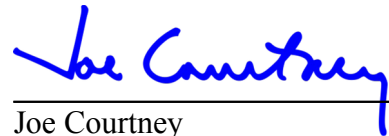
Andre Carson
Member of Congress



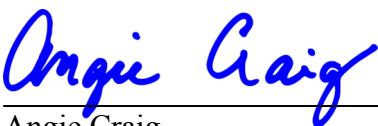
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



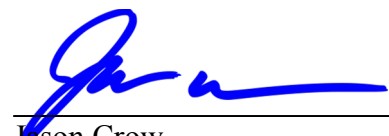
Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress




Joe Courtney
Member of Congress




Angie Craig
Member of Congress



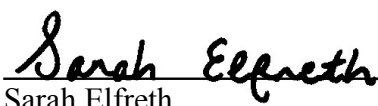
Jason Crow
Member of Congress



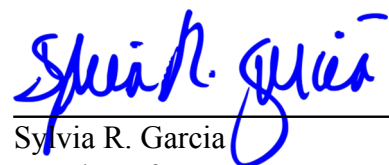
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



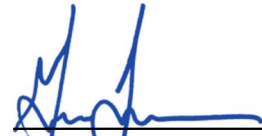
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



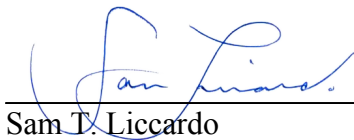
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



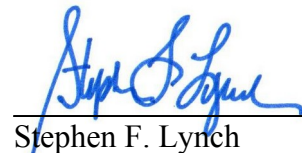
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



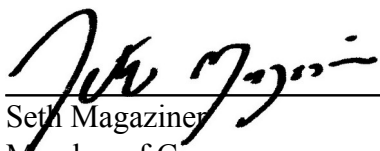
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress




Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



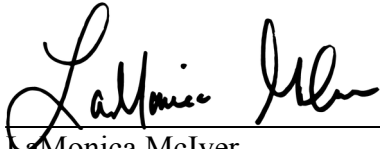
Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



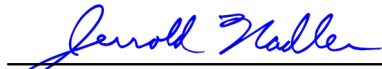
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



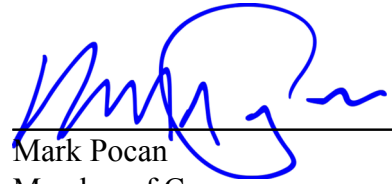
Jerrold Nadler
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Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
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Mike Quigley
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Mikie Sherrill
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Eric Sorensen
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Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



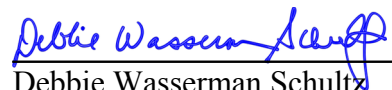
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress