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Joe Kennedy to bring transgender soldier to Trump's State of the Union

By Jacqueline Thomsen - 01/28/18 04:31 PM EST

Rep. Joseph Kennedy (D-Mass.) has invited a transgender soldier to President Trump's first State of the Union in protest of the administration's attempt to ban transgender people from the military.

Staff Sgt. Patricia King will be the lawmaker's guest to Trump's address, [according to The Boston Globe](#).

King told the Globe that she realized she was a transgender woman while serving in the military, and soon came out to her family.

Trump announced last year that he was banning transgender people from serving in the U.S. military. However, courts have [halted](#) the ban and transgender people were allowed to enlist starting Jan. 1.

"I have served for almost 19 years," King told the Globe. "And all of a sudden, it is all hanging in the balance."

King also told the publication that she was the first service member to have her gender reassignment surgery paid for by the military.

"There are much easier ways to get surgery covered than enlisting in the military, [facing] the possibility of deployment, and dealing with the stigma of being a transgender service member," she said. "Every one of us who raises our right hand is prepared to give everything in the defense of our country."

Kennedy, a rising star in the Democratic Party who will [deliver the party's response](#) to Trump's address, told the paper that he invited King to remind the president of transgender service members' dedication to the U.S.

"I want her to be there as a real person, and the face of an inhumane policy," Kennedy said.

Trump will deliver his first State of the Union on Tuesday night.

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