

House passes resolution denouncing transgender military ban

The nonbinding resolution passed 238-185 on Thursday, with all Democrats supporting it and almost all Republicans opposing it.

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By The Associated Press and Tim Fitzsimons

In a rebuke to President Donald Trump, the House on Thursday voted against his administration's move to restrict transgender men and women from military service.

The nonbinding resolution passed 238-185, with every Democrat supporting it and almost every Republican voting against it.

The Trump administration's policy bars people who have undergone gender transition from enlisting. It also requires military personnel to serve as their biological gender unless they began a gender transition under less restrictive Obama administration rules.

The policy is being challenged in court.

"It's a welcoming reassurance that the elected leaders in the U.S. House support the more than 13,000 brave transgender service members who proudly dedicate their lives to our nation," said Sarah Kate Ellis, president and CEO of GLAAD, an LGBTQ advocacy organization. "It's time for President Trump to drop his proposed ban and stand with transgender patriots putting their lives on the line to keep us all safe."

Rep. Joe Kennedy, D-Mass., and the resolution's sponsor, says Trump's policy amounts to "targeted discrimination." He says the House vote sends a message to transgender people "that they cannot be banned from military service because of who they are."

Only last month, a bipartisan group of legislators attempted to undo Trump's ban, which was announced in July 2017 in a series of [tweets](#). Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., Jack Reed, D-R.I., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, introduced legislation in February that would permit transgender service members to continue to serve and allow trans people to join the military.

"The military wants and needs transgender service members, but this president is ready to put his own prejudice ahead of science and military readiness," Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, said. "It is more important than ever for Congress to stand up for troops and reject this flagrantly dangerous policy."

"Today's bipartisan majority in the U.S. House join leading medical associations, national security experts and former military officials in opposing this dangerous and discriminatory policy," Sarah McBride, national press secretary for the Human Rights Campaign, said. "We urge the U.S. Senate to take action so that every service member can know that both the chambers of Congress respect their service."

House votes to condemn Trump's limits on transgender troops

By: Susannah George, The Associated Press 11 hours ago

WASHINGTON — The House delivered a rebuke to President Donald Trump on Thursday by voting to condemn his administration's move to [restrict transgender men and women](#) from military service.

A non-binding resolution opposing Trump's transgender ban passed 238-185. Every Democrat supported the resolution, while nearly every Republican voted against it. Five Republicans broke ranks and voted in favor: Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania, Trey Hollingsworth of Indiana, Will Hurd of Texas, John Katko of New York and Tom Reed of New York.

The [Trump administration's policy](#) bars people who have undergone gender transition from enlisting. It also requires military personnel to serve as their biological gender unless they began a gender transition under less restrictive Obama administration rules. The policy is being challenged in court.

Rep. Joe Kennedy, D-Mass., the resolution's sponsor, said Trump's policy amounts to "targeted discrimination." He said the House was voting to tell transgender people "that they cannot be banned from military service because of who they are."

The top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Mac Thornberry of Texas, opposed the resolution and said the vote attempted to politicize U.S. service members. Thornberry said because the resolution does not change law or policy it was a "messaging bill" that detracted from "serious issues that need to be discussed."

Ahead of the vote many Democratic lawmakers placed transgender pride flags outside their offices on Capitol Hill, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who spoke from the floor in support of the resolution.

"There is no moral justification for this ban which violates every value of our American democracy," Pelosi said Thursday.

Under the Obama administration, the Pentagon announced that transgender people already serving in the military would be allowed to serve openly. Trump reversed that policy beginning in 2017 with a tweet that the government would not allow "Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military."

An estimated 14,700 troops on active duty and in the Reserves identify as transgender, but not all seek treatment. Since July 2016, more than 1,500 service members were diagnosed with gender dysphoria; as of Feb. 1, there were 1,071 currently serving. The Pentagon says it has spent about \$8 million on transgender care since 2016. The military's annual health care budget tops \$50 billion.

[All four service chiefs](#) told Congress last year that they had seen no discipline, morale or unit readiness problems with transgender troops serving openly in the military. But they also acknowledged that some commanders were spending a lot of time with transgender individuals who were working through medical requirements and other transition issues.

Speaking from the House floor ahead of the vote, Armed Services Chair Adam Smith, D-Wash., said the Trump administration policy is "primarily based on ignorance and bias against the transgender community."

“We have the best military in the world,” Smith said. “We need highly qualified people to serve and to single out a particular group — to discriminate against them and to say they cannot serve — is bad for national security.”

House denounces Trump transgender ban

By [CLAUDIA GRISALES](#) | STARS AND STRIPES Published: March 28, 2019

WASHINGTON — The House approved a resolution Thursday condemning a controversial Trump administration ban of transgender personnel in the military ahead of the plan's potential implementation next month.

The Democrat-controlled chamber approved the largely symbolic resolution in a vote of 238 to 185, including five Republicans who voted in favor of the measure.

“Today, this House has the chance not to repeat the mistakes of our past, to move one step closer to that sacred promise by telling brave trans men and women in uniform that they cannot be banned from military service because of who they are,” Rep. Joe Kennedy III, D-Mass., author of H.Res. 124, said ahead of Thursday's vote.

Next month, a new Pentagon policy is slated to reverse a 2016 initiative that lifted the ban on transgender men and women serving in the military, but it will allow people serving now to remain in the service. It disqualifies from service all transgender people who require or have already undergone gender transition, and bans people with current or recent gender dysphoria diagnosis other than in rare circumstances.

Kennedy's resolution, which is unlikely to gain further traction through the Republican-controlled Senate, expresses opposition to banning service in the armed forces by openly transgender individuals. It states the service of transgender individuals has had “minimal” impact on the military since it was permitted in 2016. The resolution estimates thousands of transgender personnel now serve in the military and disputes the Defense Department contention that there is scientific uncertainty regarding the efficacy of related care.

Instead, the policy is based on discrimination, the resolution contends.

“We believe the policy the Pentagon is putting forward is unfair and based on ignorance and bigotry and will actually harm national security,” Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said from the lower chamber's floor ahead of the Thursday vote.

Democrats have also argued that military spending for care of transgender personnel is less than 1 percent of its overall budget for active-duty servicemembers, reaching \$2.2 million in 2017. That's five times less than it would cost to retrain a fifth-generation fighter pilot and less than 10 times the annual amount spent on erectile dysfunction medication.

“This is an act of cruelty,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. “The president's ban... is cruel and arbitrary, a decision designed to humiliate the transgender Americans who are risking and giving their lives for the United States of America. There is no moral justification for this ban, which violates every value of American democracy and betrays our fundamental belief in fairness, dignity and respect.”

The debate comes on the heels of a Tuesday move by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to drop a final, remaining injunction stopping implementation of the ban. Some experts said they expected the decision to allow the Defense Department to proceed with its plans to implement the ban as early as next month.

In January, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5-4 ruling in favor of the ban, allowing the measure to stay in place pending several lawsuits fighting the move.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia previously said a lower court judge erred in

blocking the policy, also known as the “Mattis Plan,” which was named for former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis who drafted its specifics. The policy originated from a proposal in 2017 by President Donald Trump.

The White House effort to ban transgender people from military service was subsequently mired in confusion and litigation for nearly two years after Trump fired off a series of tweets that ignited the controversy, some experts have said.

“After consultation with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military. Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail. Thank you,” Trump’s July 26, 2017 tweets read.

The 2016 Pentagon policy to open the military to transgender individuals had remained in place, but a Trump administration effort to reverse it created a chilling effect for potential recruits and heightened fears for some servicemembers, some advocates for transgender personnel have said.

Rep. Susan Davis, D-Calif., said its unfortunate the Trump administration is attempting to ban transgender people from service especially when the Army, the Navy and Air Force are struggling to meet recruitment goals.

“This administration is resorting to misinformation, misinformation to exclude capable, qualified people from service to their country,” Davis said Thursday from the House floor. “We cannot be turning away dedicated, able-bodied recruits simply because they happen to be transgender.”

About a month after the Trump tweet, the president formally issued a new directive to the Defense Department to issue the ban. With that, Mattis issued a new 48-page policy in March 2018 to ban most transgender individuals from serving in the military. The transgender military ban by Trump had been blocked by four federal judges, with injunctions pending the outcome of four discrimination lawsuits filed by transgender individuals and advocates against the federal government.

Also following the Trump tweets, a bipartisan group of lawmakers, including the late Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain, then-chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, former Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and more than 50 retired generals and admirals condemned the move.

Other senators filed legislation to block a military transgender ban. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who through Senate Armed Services Committee hearings last year, was able to confirm with all four military service chiefs that transgender servicemembers have not impacted morale or created problems for the services. Also, current and former top U.S. medical officials charged the ban was not based on a medically valid reason.

House rebuffs Trump over transgender military ban

Jamie Dupree [Fox News reporter. Ed]

22 hours ago

The House of Representatives on Thursday split almost cleanly along party lines in a vote to rebuke President Donald Trump for his ban on transgender Americans serving in the military, as Democrats denounced the decision as a bigoted stain on the armed services.

"We will not stand for ignorance and bigotry in our military or anywhere else," said Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

"I am proud to vote against a discriminatory ban on transgender individuals serving in the military and uphold our commitment to equality across our nation," said Rep. Joe Negeuse (D-CO).

"All Americans who want to serve, who meet our standards, should be given the right to fight," said Rep. Anthony Brown (D-MD), as all Democrats voted for the plan, while six Republicans broke ranks on the measure.

"It reflects bias. It reflects prejudice," said Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD).

