

Immediate Release

Statement by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Transgender Service in the Military

Jan. 25, 2021

I fully support the President's direction that all transgender individuals who wish to serve in the United States military and can meet the appropriate standards shall be able to do so openly and free from discrimination.

The Department will immediately take appropriate policy action to ensure individuals who identify as transgender are eligible to enter and serve in their self-identified gender. These changes will ensure no one will be separated or discharged, or denied reenlistment, solely on the basis of gender identity.

Prospective recruits may serve in their self-identified gender when they have met the appropriate standards for accession into the military services. This revised policy will also ensure all medically-necessary transition related care

authorized by law is available to all Service members and will re-examine all cases of transgender Service members that may be in some form of adverse administrative proceedings.

Over the next 60 days, I look forward to working with the senior civilian and military leaders of the Department as we expeditiously develop the appropriate policies and procedures to implement these changes.

The United States Armed Forces are in the business of defending our fellow citizens from our enemies, foreign and domestic. I believe we accomplish that mission more effectively when we represent all our fellow citizens. I also believe we should avail ourselves of the best possible talent in our population, regardless of gender identity. We would be rendering ourselves less fit to the task if we excluded from our ranks people who meet our standards and who have the skills and the devotion to serve in uniform.

This is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do.