

# Donald trump's presidency

[Politics](#), [President](#)



Donald Trump's presidency has brought a lot of controversy with it. His constant tweeting, his blunt statements, and his act-now-think-later mentality have earned him both praise and criticism since the moment he announced he would run for United States President. One act that has stirred up a lot of mixed emotions is President Trump's announcement of a ban that would prevent transgender individuals from serving in the military.

This ban, which was first announced via President Trump's twitter account in late July, will override an Obama-era plan that was previously in place specifically to allow transgender individuals to serve in the military (Davis, 2017). Perhaps what is the most frustrating development of this ban for many people is the fact that it was revealed shortly after President Trump declared his great respect for members of the LGBT community and intentions to protect their individual rights and freedoms during his presidential campaign.

While many have cited discrimination as the reason behind this act, President Trump and his staff have ensured the public that this ban is purely for national security reasons, and he wanted to assure the LGBT community that this is not a betrayal (Cooper, 2017). This ban has been a hotly debated topic for quite a while.

While both the Trump administration, supporters of the ban, and those opposed to the ban all have valid arguments, anyone who is willing to fight and die for his or her country and its freedoms should have the opportunity to do so. This statement holds especially true for Americans because the United States was founded on this very principle. While the military shouldn't

pay for gender reassignment surgeries and treatments, recruitment options should be open to all Americans, including transgender individuals.

There are many reasons why this is acceptable, including the fact that transgender people are already serving in the military, transgender individuals provide little to no disruption of military activities, and the transgender ban is currently being scrutinized in court for its constitutionality. Taking all of this into consideration, it's hard to see a reason why transgender individuals shouldn't be allowed to fight for the freedom our country provides.

It's difficult to argue that transgender individuals shouldn't be allowed in the military simply because there are already transgender people serving in the military today. In fact, as of 2016, there are an estimated 6, 630 actively serving transgender individuals in the military and anywhere from 2, 030 to 7, 160 individuals serving in reserves. Along with these numbers, an estimated 150, 000 transgender individuals have served since the year 2012, which is about 21% of all transgender adults in the United States according to UCLA researchers.

In contrast, only 10% of the general non-transgender population has served (Hamblin, 2017). The fact that a higher percentage of transgender individuals has served in the United States military compared to those who do not identify as transgender should serve as an eye-opener to many. After all, active military service poses many risks, especially during times of conflict or war. In fact, several American and British armed forces members in Afghanistan were asked about the threats that they faced.

The statistics, which are represented by the above image, are quite shocking. Roughly half of all individuals interviewed said that they saw at least one person killed while actively serving. One in every six people witnessed a close friend being injured or killed. One in four were injured by an IED, three in four experienced long-range attacks with rockets or mortars, and half had been attacked at close range with machine guns (Gee, 2017).

The point of these statistics is that serving in the United States military can be dangerous, and if such a high percentage of transgender adults are willing to serve in the United States military and risk injury, they shouldn't be denied the ability to do so. The decision to serve in the United States Military should be respected regardless of any drama created by gender. Along with the fact that transgender Americans have already proved that they are willing to make the same sacrifices as their military comrades, a large majority of transgender individuals cause little to no disruption of military activity while serving.

In fact, as far as disruption of military activity is concerned, transgender individuals who could possibly be disrupting military activity by getting reassignment surgery account for less than 1% of all available members. The actual number of all individuals estimated to have surgical treatments while actively serving was between 25 and 130 individuals - hardly enough to cause any meaningful hindrance to military activities (PBS, 2017).

In regards to this same issue of military disruption, eighteen other countries were examined in a study to determine if transgender service members cause any noticeable problems. Overall, the study " didn't find any readiness

or cohesion implications" involving transgender individuals. Many countries revealed concerns about bullying issues at one point, but it was later determined that simple policy changes were able to deal with this issue (PBS, 2017).

If other countries are able to work around the minor 'difficulties' that transgender individuals may pose, then why can't the United States as well? Surely if this situation is able to work for other countries, it can for Americans as well. Along with this information, President Trump's proposed ban has received legal criticism as well.

There are concerns that this ban would violate the Constitutional rights of those individuals affected by the ban. One example of the legal obstacles that this ban has faced occurred in August of 2017. Two gay rights groups filed a lawsuit to 'ban' the ban before it could be instated. This lawsuit was filed on behalf of five transgender women who are openly and actively serving in the military, for they feel strongly that this ban would violate their constitutional rights (Cooper, 2017).

Although the lawsuit itself wasn't the cause, the individuals who filed the suit earned at least a temporary victory in late October, for the ban was temporarily blocked in court by a federal judge (Kheel, 2017). This same judge responsible for the blockage was quoted saying that the ban " does not appear to be supported by any facts." Along with this, another federal judge reviewed this ban in court and halted the ban altogether (Marimow, 2017).

He stated that active-duty transgender service men and women already suffer harmful consequences because of the president's policy. Some examples of said consequences include being set apart as inherently unfit, facing the threat of discharge, the inability to move ahead with long-term medical plans, and the inability to commission as an officer. Due to these two federal court rulings, it is clear that there is much to be concerned about regarding the legality of the ban.

A third court case was carried out with the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NLCR) and the GLBTQ Legal Advocates ; Defenders (GLAD) as the plaintiffs. They argued that the ban violates the Fifth Amendment rights of all transgender service members, and they pushed for the removal of the ban on funds for gender reassignment surgery (which accompanied the transgender ban).

Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly presided over the court. After the case ended, she wrote a 76-page memo emphasizing the fact that the plaintiffs' Fifth Amendment claim is a strong one that will prove difficult to refute once it reaches the Supreme Court. The fact that this ban has been heavily criticized, and in some cases acted upon, by not one, not two, but three highly-esteemed judges only serves to prove that this ban is in violation of the Fifth Amendment and is highly discriminatory against transgender individuals who are only trying to serve their country.

This ban has only encountered setback after setback in court, yet the Secretary of Defense is still being pressured to produce a plan for both carrying out the ban and dealing with currently enlisted transgender

individuals. Although President Trump is still pushing for action to be taken, the ban is still being processed through the courts as an appeal is being sought after due to the decisions made from past cases (Lopez, 2017).

Although there are many 'arguments' out there that support the idea of a United States Military with a transgender ban, they lack substantial evidence, and the evidence that is presented is far from accurate in most cases. President Trump's two main reasons for the ban, disruption of military service and health and medical costs, are easily discredited when all of the facts are lined out. In regards to 'disruption of services,' it's clear to see why this isn't a legitimate issue for the United States Military.

First of all, there is roughly, on estimate, a total of 13, 500 transgender individuals serving actively, in the reserves, or in the National Guard. Of these 13, 500 transgender individuals, only an estimated 25-130 active members will ever undergo long-term surgical treatments that would cause disruption while serving.

These numbers, compared with the estimated 1, 281, 900 total of all active service member, along with the 801, 200 estimated to be in reserve, account for far less than even one percent of the military's total service members (PBS, 2017). So, assuming that the highest estimate of 130 military members undergo surgical treatment while serving, an extremely insignificant fraction of all military members would be incapable of carrying out military duties while recovering.

This accounts for .0015% of all available 'manpower' at any given time for the military (PBS, 2017). That percentage is hardly worthy of being referred to as a 'disruption.' The second main 'reason' behind this ban is the potential costs. The President and his staff worry that the medical treatments and surgeries that transgender individuals require is an expensive and unnecessary cost to the United States Military budget.

While gender reassignments and other surgeries are certainly expensive, as stated in the previous paragraph, only about 25-130 individuals will even have the operation done (PBS, 2017), and the military has historically not been required to pay for these surgeries unless they are proven medically necessary on a case-by-case basis. Along with this information, a study in The New England Journal of Medicine in 2015 found that the total costs for these surgeries and treatments would amount to somewhere between 4.2-5.6 million dollars, or roughly ten percent of the annual military healthcare budget.

For those that think this is a large amount of money, the annual amount of taxpayer dollars spent on medication for erectile dysfunction alone is over ten times this amount at 84 million dollars annually. Claiming that transgender medical costs are expensive and unnecessary is plain wrong. While not all treatments are medically 'necessary,' several treatments are. Denying transgender individuals from serving in the military due to medical costs would be the equivalent of denying a diabetic the ability to serve; it makes no sense.



President Trump has made a lot of changes since he was elected into Presidency. While his decisions usually at least make some sense, the transgender military ban makes no sense at all. His two main reasons for this ban, which were potential disruption of military activity and medical costs, are backed by little to no evidence, and his ban is coming across as discriminatory both in the public eye and in court so far.

Transgender individuals should not be denied the right to serve because they have been allowed to serve (not openly) for several years with little to no problem, they don't cause any disruption or hindrance to military activity, and the ban itself is being reviewed for its potential violation of the Fifth Amendment and discrimination against transgender individuals. All of this effort for a ban that isn't necessary should be spent on something more useful to America.