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Aaron Belkin's Statement on New RAND Report on Transgender Military Service

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Aaron Belkin, director of the [Palm Center](#), released the following statement in response to the RAND report commissioned by the Pentagon to study transgender military service:

"While the Defense Secretary and the White House insist that inclusive policy for transgender troops is a 'complicated issue,' RAND's new study on transgender military service reminds us of the few simple principles necessary to make any change in military personnel policy successful. In doing so, RAND confirms the findings of all of the Palm Center's previous research: inclusive policy will not compromise readiness, will not be costly, and will not be difficult to formulate or implement. In fact, RAND highlights the real costs of the current ban: lower readiness from denial of health care and the loss of talented, trained personnel who want to serve their country. Perhaps most importantly, RAND's research reminds us of the key lesson from the repeal of 'don't ask, don't tell': strong leadership and clear policy are the keys to smooth implementation. If leaders hold subordinates accountable for following the rules and treating colleagues with respect, and if the Pentagon formulates clear policy based on evidence, not personal opinion, then the transition will be successful."

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About The Palm Center:

The Palm Center is an independent research institute committed to sponsoring state-of-the-art scholarship to enhance the quality of public dialogue about critical and controversial issues of the day. Our research has been published in leading social scientific journals and extensively consulted and cited by the US military and others. The Palm Center seeks to be a resource for scholars, policymakers, journalists, opinion leaders, students and the public at large. For more information, visit us at www.palmcenter.org.