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## Prominent Retired Generals: Military is Ready for Transgender Service

*Generals, Commission Members Offer New Report as Roadmap to Implementing Full, Inclusive Policy*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** – Three retired US military General Officers, including the former chief medical officer of the US Army, issued a joint statement today concluding that the military’s ban on transgender service could be eliminated in a straightforward manner that is consistent with military readiness and core values.

Their statement accompanies the release of a new study, [“Report of the Planning Commission on Transgender Military Service,”](#) which finds that allowing transgender personnel to serve in the military **“is administratively feasible and will not be burdensome or complicated,”** and provides a detailed roadmap for the policy change. According to the Generals’ statement, the report **“shows that implementation could proceed immediately and will be successful in its execution.”**

The full statement of the retired General Officers is as follows:

**“We spent three months serving on a research commission that investigated administrative aspects of transgender military service, with a view toward maintaining readiness and alignment with core military values of dignity and respect. Today, our commission releases a report, which focuses on how to implement inclusive policy in allowing transgender Americans to serve their country. Our conclusion is that allowing transgender personnel to serve openly is administratively feasible and will not be burdensome or complicated. Three months have passed since Defense Secretary Hagel announced a willingness to review the military’s ban on transgender service, an effort the White House indicated it supports. Our new report shows that implementation could proceed immediately and will be successful in its execution.”**

The retired Generals who issued today’s statement are Major General Gale S. Pollock, former acting Surgeon General of the US Army; Brigadier General Clara Adams-Ender, former Chief of the US Army Nurse Corps; and Brigadier General Thomas A. Kolditz, a Yale University professor and Professor Emeritus at the US Military Academy at West Point, where he led the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. The Commission’s report points out that, unlike “don’t ask, don’t tell,” the ban on openly gay

service that was repealed by Congress in 2010, the transgender service ban is not a statutory bar, but falls “under the authority and jurisdiction of the President and Secretary of Defense.”

In an accompanying statement, Commission Co-Chair Shannon Minter, Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, **called on the White House and Pentagon to follow through on implementing a fully inclusive policy.** His full statement is as follows:

**“The three distinguished retired Generals continue to serve their country with the release of today’s report, which confirms what we learned from NATO allies and the repeal of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ here at home: that discriminatory policy is unnecessary and inconsistent with the military’s core values. In an earlier study, the former US Surgeon General, along with retired General and Flag Officers, concluded that transgender personnel are as fit to serve and as ready for deployment to austere environments as anyone else. It is essential for the Department of Defense to begin to review its ban on transgender military service now, and to replace it with fully inclusive policy. Today’s report provides a comprehensive roadmap of the steps that are needed for the full implementation of an inclusive approach, and further establishes to the Administration that a new policy will be successfully executed.”**

The new report, co-authored by a nine-member expert Commission, is [the second in a series on transgender military service released this year](#) by the Palm Center. The [first report](#), released in March by a former US Surgeon General and a Commission including retired General and Flag Officers, concluded that transgender personnel are as medically ready for deployment to austere environments and as fit to serve as non-transgender personnel, and that the ban on transgender military service is not based on sound medical reasoning. As well, the first report called for military experts to “formulate administrative guidance” to address all implementation aspects of creating a new, inclusive policy.

Today’s Commission report responds to the call for administrative guidance, providing a roadmap that identifies 14 aspects of policy formulation for a non-discriminatory rule on transgender service. The report is based on research into the 18 foreign nations that currently allow transgender service, as well as lessons learned from US military integration of previously excluded populations, including gay, lesbian and bisexual personnel. It notes that approximately 15,500 currently-serving troops are transgender but must lie about it and cannot access medically-necessary health care as a result.

In addition to finding that the ban could be lifted without harming readiness, today’s report notes that the current policy undermines “core military values and principles” including that “all military personnel should serve with honor and integrity, which means that they should not have to lie about who they are; all members of the military should be treated with respect; all persons capable of serving their country should be allowed to do so; and the military should not needlessly separate personnel who are willing and able to serve.”

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*The Palm Center is committed to sponsoring state-of-the-art scholarship to enhance the quality of public dialogue about critical and controversial issues of the day.*

*For the past decade, the Palm Center's research on sexual minorities in the military has been published in leading social scientific journals. The Palm Center seeks to be a resource for university-affiliated as well as independent scholars, students, journalists, opinion leaders, and members of the public. For more information, see [www.palmcenter.org](http://www.palmcenter.org)*