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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, July 7, 2016

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Pentagon and Congressional Leaders to Address Symposium on Transgender Military Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Under Secretary of Defense Peter Levine, House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, will address a July 13 symposium on transgender military service. The symposium, titled "Inclusive Military Policy: Transgender Service, Like Repealing DADT, Strengthens the Force," follows Defense Secretary Ashton Carter's announcement last week of the lifting of the Pentagon's ban on transgender personnel.

According to Rep. Hoyer, **"Secretary Carter has strengthened readiness by ensuring that our military draws on the talents of all Americans who can do the job."** Rep. Smith observed that, **"Like 'don't ask, don't tell,' the transgender ban compromised military and personal integrity by forcing service members to lie about who they are. Thanks to a badly needed policy change, we now have rules that are based on core military values of honesty, respect and merit."**

Speakers will include Major General Gale Pollock, USA (Ret.) and Rear Admiral Alan Steinman, USCG (Ret.) representing the community of retired General and Flag Officers; Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Victor Valenzuela, Army Captain Sage Fox, and Army Staff Sergeant A. Nazzal representing 12,800 transgender troops serving currently; Major Kimberly Moore, USMC (Ret.) representing 134,000 transgender veterans; British Army Captain Hannah Winterbourne, representing 19 militaries that allow transgender service; and Dr. Nathaniel Frank, who will underscore the connection between "don't ask, don't tell" and the transgender ban.

The symposium is co-sponsored by 13 organizations including American Civil Liberties Union, American Military Partner Association, Human Rights Campaign, Military Partners and Families Coalition, National Center for Lesbian Rights, National Center for Transgender Equality, OutServe-SLDN, Palm Center, SPARTA, Transgender American Veterans Association, Transgender Law Center, TransMilitary, and Williams Institute, UCLA.*

The event will take place from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm in the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill (Regency D room), 400 New Jersey Ave. NW. Attendance is free and open to the public, but attendees must RSVP by sending their names to transmilitaryrsvp@gmail.com. Members of the media should RSVP to Kristofer Eisenla of LUNA+EISENLA media at kristofer@lunaeisenlamedia.com.

*All opinions presented will be of the speakers as individuals, not the US government, US military, British government, or British military. The Williams Institute at UCLA is a Research Co-Sponsor.

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