

PALM CENTER

BLUEPRINTS FOR SOUND PUBLIC POLICY

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Conservatives Launch Full-Scale Campaign to Reinstate "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" for Transgender Troops

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — A broad coalition of conservative activists, think tanks, pollsters, advocacy groups, politicians, and media outlets has launched an attack campaign to reinstate “don’t ask, don’t tell” for transgender service members. According to Palm Center director Aaron Belkin, **"This is a full-scale effort to inflame the culture wars on the backs of loyal transgender troops."**

“Don’t ask, don’t tell,” the widely discredited law that prohibited gays, lesbians and bisexuals from serving openly in the military, was repealed in 2011, but transgender Americans were not allowed to serve until June 30, 2016. For the past year, they have been able to serve honestly, and to receive medically necessary health care.

During the past several weeks, however, [Breitbart](#), [Fox](#), [Christian Broadcasting Network](#), [Axios](#) and [Newsmax](#) ran stories criticizing transgender troops; the [Family Research Council](#), [Center for Military Readiness](#) and a group of [85 conservative thought leaders](#) called for reinstating the ban; the [Heritage Foundation](#) applauded a delay in inclusive policy; [Rasmussen](#) tried to use new polling data to suggest that the public opposes transgender military service; and the [Liberty Council](#) argued that inclusive policy compromises religious beliefs of military personnel.

Last Friday, Representatives [Vicky Hartzler](#) (R-MO) and [Steve King](#) (R-IA) introduced amendments to deny health care to transgender troops, and [Tucker Carlson](#) called on Defense Secretary James Mattis to resign if transgender troops are allowed to serve.

According to Belkin, **"This is a coordinated campaign to reinstate ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ for transgender troops. It is striking that the old guard didn’t seem to learn anything from the failure of the first ‘don’t ask, don’t tell.’"**

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About the Palm Center: *The Palm Center is an independent research institute sponsoring state-of-the-art scholarship to enhance the quality of public dialogue about*

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