

PALM CENTER

BLUEPRINTS FOR SOUND PUBLIC POLICY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, July 20, 2017
CONTACT: Kristofer Eisenla, [LUNA+EISENLA media](mailto:kristofer@lunaeisenlamedia.com)
kristofer@lunaeisenlamedia.com | 202-670-5747 (mobile)

Congresswoman Seeking to Create “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” for Transgender Troops Promotes False Data

SAN FRANCISCO, CA —Representative Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) is again promoting false data about health care costs and military readiness as she renews her push to create a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy for transgender troops.

According to Palm Center director Aaron Belkin, **“The research shows that transgender military service does not compromise readiness, so Representative Hartzler has generated her own ‘alternative’ facts to justify her efforts to discriminate.”**

Having twice failed to persuade Congress to block transgender service earlier this month, Representative Hartzler reportedly may now try to enact a ban via the defense appropriations process next week, according to [Politico](#).

Representative Hartzler asserted that the cost of providing medically necessary healthcare to transgender troops would be \$130 million per year. But [the RAND Corporation, which has worked closely with the Pentagon for decades, found that the cost of providing such care is, at most, \\$8.4 million per year](#), and the [New England Journal of Medicine reported that the cost would be \\$5.6 million](#).

Representative Hartzler also asserted that transgender personnel would frequently be unavailable for deployment, ignoring that the RAND Corporation found that [only a small minority of the thousands of currently serving transgender troops require surgery](#) (between 25 and 130 per year); that [the effect of inclusive policy on deployability is “negligible” and “significantly smaller than the lack of availability due to \[other\] medical conditions;”](#) and that, at most, 0.0015 percent of available deployable labor-years could be affected.

Finally, Representative Hartzler asserted that there is scientific disagreement on the effectiveness of transition-related care, ignoring the [global medical consensus that medically necessary transition-related care is effective, reliable and safe](#).

“Thousands of transgender troops have been serving for an entire year, and they have been widely praised by Commanders,” according to Belkin,

“and 18 foreign militaries allow transgender personnel to serve. Transgender military service works, and pretending that it does not requires inventing data. This is the same, discredited strategy that opponents used to prop up the failed ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy the first time around.”

###

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 controversial issues of the day. Our research has been published in leading social scientific journals and consulted and cited by military and political leaders. The Palm Center seeks to be a resource for scholars, policymakers, journalists, opinion leaders, students and the public at large. For more information, visit www.palmcenter.org.*