

Letter on Trump's proposed policy on transgender people in the military

To the editor:

The Trump administration's recently announced policy on transgender people in the military is cruel and discriminatory. We oppose it as we oppose all discrimination against transgender people.

Quakers are one of the historic peace churches. From 1660 onwards, Friends have upheld the Peace Testimony, refusing to fight with outward weapons. At the same time, we support the human rights of people in the military. Further, we know that the human resources policy of the military has historically set a precedent for civilian employers and we reject a precedent that encourages discrimination.

We therefore call upon the President and Congress to reject this anti-transgender policy and to act to protect the civil and human rights of all transgender Americans, within the military and outside of it.

This recent policy requires transgender people to live "in their biological sex" (i.e. their anatomical sex at birth) in order to be permitted to serve in the military. It allows military personnel to be diagnosed with gender dysphoria, but then does not allow them to receive the relevant treatment that some of them may need for their dysphoria. Transgender people who have transitioned already will be forbidden from enlisting in the military. Furthermore, anyone who had been diagnosed with gender dysphoria must have been living "in their biological sex" for three years before being allowed to enlist.

This policy runs counter to prevailing and respected medical, scientific, psychological, and therapeutic treatment norms and also discriminates against those transgender people who have already transitioned. It forces people who are now generally classified as having gender dysphoria to choose between receiving the appropriate medical or counseling treatment, if needed or desired, and keeping their jobs. It also denies fundamental medical or counseling care to transgender service members and thus makes them second class citizens.

This policy discriminates against transgender people who seek to enlist and harms transgender people already in the military. In both cases, it also sets a dangerous precedent for civilian employers. We oppose it and ask you to join us.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of (Quakers) Friends
(Transgender Rights Working Group)