



March 28, 2019

800 Maine Avenue, S.W.  
Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20024

The Honorable Joe Kennedy III  
US House of Representatives  
304 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A.  
*CEO and Medical Director*

Dear Representative Kennedy:

On behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the national medical specialty association representing over 38,500 psychiatric physicians, we thank you for your leadership in opposing the Department of Defense's policy to ban open service by transgender individuals in the Armed Forces. APA supports H. Res. 124 and the call to maintain an inclusive policy allowing all qualified Americans to enlist and serve in the U.S. Armed Forces.

APA opposes discrimination against transgender individuals, upholding long-standing policy that calls for the protection of transgender and gender variants' civil rights. Last year, we reiterated our position in response to the Administration's ban on military service for the vast majority of transgender individuals. We were also disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision to lift the injunctions imposed by lower courts on the enforcement of this ban earlier this year.

A recent RAND study estimates that there are approximately 2,450 transgender personnel in the active component (out of a total number of approximately 1.3 million active-component service members) and 1,510 in the Selected Reserve. Policy changes to open more roles to women and to allow gay and lesbian personnel to serve openly in the U.S. military have had no significant effect on unit cohesion, operational effectiveness, or readiness. As physicians providing treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders, we affirm that being transgender or gender diverse implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or ability to serve in the military. This ban is not informed by medical evidence and ignores the negative impacts it will have on the mental health and overall health outcomes of these transgender service members.

In sum, all Americans who meet the strenuous requirements and volunteer to serve in the U.S. military should be given the opportunity to do so. Thank you for your leadership in introducing H. Res. 124. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Troubh at [mtroubh@psych.org](mailto:mtroubh@psych.org) or at (202) 559-3571.

Sincerely,

Saul Levin, MD, MPA, FRCP-E  
CEO and Medical Director  
American Psychiatric Association