

My name is Captain Jennifer Peace. I am a Captain in the United States Army currently assigned as the Executive Officer for the Iranian Division of the Defense Intelligence Agency. I have served in the military for fifteen years, five as an enlisted Soldier prior to commissioning in 2009. I have deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, Kandahar, Afghanistan, as well as to Korea, Malaysia and Japan. I was the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for Fort Huachuca in 2008 and the Distinguished Honor Graduate for the Military Intelligence Captains Career Course. I have served as a primary staff intelligence officer for infantry and armor battalions, and recently as a Company Commander for an Infantry Brigade Headquarters Company. Most recently I was selected to become one of 300 Strategic Intelligence Officers in the US Army and attend the National Intelligence University. I tell you this not to highlight my own success, but to illustrate what all trans service members are capable of- performing at the top of their career fields and contributing significantly to the defense of the nation. This is the quality of Soldiers we are now at risk of losing.

As a Company Commander, two of my primary concerns were the readiness and morale of my unit. I know the impact that non-deployable Soldiers can have on mission accomplishment. Transgender service members are no different than anyone else and should be held to the same standards of readiness. After having medically transitioned myself while serving in deployable brigade combat teams, I can tell everyone here from personal experience that an individual can transition with little to no impact to the unit. Just like with any other Soldier, our medical providers determine what is necessary, but command influences the timeline. With four surgeries and a complete medical transition, I was non-deployable for less time than a single pregnancy.

Morale was just as important during my command. A unit cannot function if individuals do not have trust in their leadership and trust in their fellow Soldiers. If they do not support and take care of each other. If they do not believe in each other's abilities and dedication. I was open as a trans service member when I was in command, and I felt an overwhelming amount of support from my commander, from my first sergeant, from my peers and subordinates alike. I led these Soldiers to the field to train reserve and National Guard troops preparing to deploy. Regardless if we were sleeping in the back of a vehicle in the deserts of California or ensuring everyone had what the supplies required to get through a day in garrison- we took care of each other without a negative word because that is what Soldiers do.

The real impact to readiness is discharging transgender Soldiers. Losing Commanders, Intelligence Officers, medics, pilots, platoon sergeants and other critical skills. That impacts readiness. Excluding a portion of the population when we cannot meet recruiting goals- that impacts readiness. And watching as those who you serve with and respect are told they are no longer welcome in service- that impacts moral. The honorable service of those who are qualified, capable and willing has not and will not.

We should also disabuse ourselves of the notion that this policy would not impact those who currently serve. The stigma attached to anyone who has been declared unfit to serve by the Commander in chief will continuously be at a disadvantage when appearing before promotion boards, schools, and other

accolades and opportunities. Leaders will be disinclined to continue to invest in Soldiers they fear may be discharged at any moment regardless of their performance and against the recommendation of unit commanders. As a commander and as a leader, the accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers are my most important priorities. A ban on transgender service members does not support either of these objectives.