



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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**STATEMENT FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES COMMISSIONER  
SUTTON ON THE PENTAGON'S ANNOUNCEMENT LIFTING BAN ON  
TRANSGENDER TROOPS**

*The Pentagon announced today it will allow transgender troops to serve openly regardless of their gender identity and free from fear of involuntary military discharge, ending a longstanding practice that denied gender equality for many service members.*

“I applaud Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter’s decision to remove the ban on transgender individuals serving openly in the armed forces. This momentous announcement is in agreement with our City’s values and recognizes that diversity is our greatest strength. This decision goes yet another step further towards opening the military’s doors to all Americans who desire to step forward and don the uniform in defense of our great nation, regardless of their relational preference and gender identity. The military has long served as a venerable American institution which has proven its ability to tackle the toughest challenges facing our society and demonstrate the transformative power of values-based leadership and mission-oriented resolve towards achieving ‘a more perfect union.’ Truly, this is a great day to celebrate for all Americans, especially the 2,500 transgender troops currently serving and their loved ones who no longer need to serve in silence or, as has been all too often the case, experience shame in the shadows.

“I am honored to serve as the first Commissioner of the Department of Veterans’ Services, following nearly three decades of military service as an Army physician. I am also proud to hail this historic milestone and know that it will fuel our ongoing work with the vibrant LGBTQ veteran community in New York City as we strive to restore justice for those who have been wronged for generations. There simply is no greater privilege.”

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