



Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader

June 10, 2016

The Honorable Ashton Carter
Secretary of Defense
United States Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for your strong leadership in protecting the security of our nation and advocating for the brave American men and women who defend freedom at home and around the globe.

As you know, July 13 will mark one year since you announced that the Department of Defense would create a six-month working group to study ending the present ban on transgender Americans serving openly in the U.S. Armed Forces. Today, however, this critical issue remains unresolved.

In your statement in 2015, you powerfully addressed the injustice facing transgender Americans who want to serve openly, saying, “We have transgender soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines – real, patriotic Americans – who I know are being hurt by an outdated, confusing, inconsistent approach that’s contrary to our value of service and individual merit.”

Today, transgender men and women are serving with honor and distinction across our national security agencies, including at the CIA and FBI, and in critical police and fire first responder roles. Transgender people have been welcomed into the militaries of 18 other nations, including the U.K., Canada, Australia and Israel. But the United States military has not kept pace on this issue of fundamental fairness.

The historic repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell in 2010 showed that we have only strengthened our military by honoring our values of freedom and equality.

It is my hope that the Defense Department will complete its promised review of the U.S. military’s current practices on this matter, and lift the outdated and discriminatory ban on transgender Americans serving our country in uniform.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Pelosi".

NANCY PELOSI
Democratic Leader