

Tony Perkins: Tell Congress to Roll Back President Obama's Military Transgender Policy

Late last week, the Family Research Council applauded Secretary of Defense James Mattis' decision to postpone an Obama administration directive that would have allowed transgendered people to join the military.

While it seems President Donald Trump's administration will likely kill the policy permanently at the end of the year, another policy remains intact in which those who have already enlisted or accepted commissions in the military may continue to serve when they are openly transgendered. This policy is already having a profound impact on war-fighting readiness but also creates a new financial burden on the already cash-strapped Department of Defense.

FRC President Tony Perkins sent out a call to action Wednesday, urging his supporters to call their elected representatives and ask them to support a measure in Congress that would roll this second policy back, as well. In an email obtained by Charisma Caucus, Perkins wrote:

Next week, the House of Representatives will vote on the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2018 ("NDAA"), and your Representative needs to hear from you about the need to roll back Obama's military transgender mandate. Tell your representative to vote for Representative Vicky Hartzler's (R-Mo.) amendment to the NDAA, to roll back the requirement that the military recruit people who identify as transgender, to stop taxpayer dollars from funding gender transition efforts, and to include conscience

protections for service members who do not wish to provide or affirm gender transition efforts.

While the Department of Defense [has delayed the implementation of the Obama-era policy for six months], the military will soon be forced to begin recruiting personnel who identify as transgender for military service. This is despite the fact that those suffering from gender dysphoria have a psychological and medical condition that until one year ago made them ineligible for military service. Allowing people who identify as transgender to serve in the military, much less be recruited for the military, will have a negative impact on readiness, recruitment, and retention, as well as unit morale and cohesion. This is particularly true because personnel who identify as transgender are expected to receive exceptions to policies and medical requirements that their peers will still be required to meet. These exceptions to policy may be applied to policies about everything from physical and mental fitness standards to dress and presentation standards, and they create an unfairness in the military that will undermine unit cohesion and morale.

Taxpayer dollars also need to be protected from funding sex reassignment surgery and hormone therapy efforts intended to change a person's gender. Estimates for these efforts, including the amount of time lost for the transition process, are about \$3.7 billion over the next ten years. This is not a good use of taxpayer funds.

In fact, the military can better use these funds for example, by purchasing twenty-two F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Planes, which cost \$166.7 million each; 116 Chinook Helicopters, which cost \$31.8 million each; 3,700 Tomahawk missiles, which are \$1 million each; or a new Destroyer for the Navy, which would be about \$3.5 billion. Spending billions of dollars on transgender surgeries and treatment plans, when the military has other priorities that would

actually ensure its effectiveness in war, is irresponsible.

In addition, the Obama-era transgender mandate does not provide conscience protections for medical and counseling providers, like chaplains, who do not think it is in the interest of the patient to attempt to undergo gender transition. The policy also does not provide conscience protections for military leaders or personnel who may have objections to being required to share sleeping or bathing facilities with persons of the opposite biological and anatomical sex. Therefore, the House Armed Services Committee must act to secure conscience protections and the freedom to believe for service members who disagree with the Obama-era transgender policy.

The House of Representatives will likely vote on Representative Hartzler's amendment next week. Tell your representative to vote for Mrs. Hartzler's amendment to roll back the Obama administration's transgender mandate on the military by calling your representative at (202) 224-3121, or email your Representative at the link below.

Urge your representative to vote for Mrs. Hartzler's amendment to roll back the Obama administration's transgender mandate, provide service members conscience protections and protect taxpayer funds from being used for sex reassignment surgery. {eo}