



Wes Moore | Governor  
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor  
Anthony Woods | Secretary

March 3, 2025

## **Statement by Secretary Anthony Woods on the Executive Order Barring Transgender Service Members from the Military**

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) stands firmly in support of all those who have answered the call to serve our country, including our transgender service members and veterans. The recent discriminatory [Executive Order](#) and policy guidance released from the Department of Defense to ban transgender military personnel from serving in the military takes aim at transgender troops in a personal way, dehumanizing them and falsely denying their honor, integrity, and sacrifice.

The military's strength has always come from the dedication and diversity of those who serve. Maryland's DVMF opposes any policy banning or discriminating against our transgender service members and veterans who serve our country with distinction and honor. This policy undermines the military's role as an inclusive institution, one that reflects the diversity of our nation's population.

We know our country is strongest when we recruit and retain the most capable and talented warfighters, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Any policy that weakens this recruitment pool only makes us less safe.

From my own personal experience, I understand the pain one goes through from being removed from an institution that you have given your life to protect. Under the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy banning openly gay, bisexual,

and lesbian people from serving in the US Armed Forces, I was discharged. I was forced to leave behind the career I had built, not because of my ability or dedication, but because of who I am. Many others, including transgender service members, faced the same injustice under "Don't ask, don't tell." Now, history is repeating itself, and transgender troops and their families are once again facing the pain, uncertainty, and betrayal of being told their service is unworthy and their sacrifice is unwelcome.

Maryland stands firmly in support of our veterans and service members. Through programs and resources, DVMF ensures equality and opportunity for all. We stand by our veterans, upholding the values of fairness, respect, and inclusivity for all those who serve.

The DVMF's resources and benefits page for LGBTQIA+ Veterans has numerous programs and resources available for impacted service members and veterans. Visit [veterans.maryland.gov/lgbtqia-veterans-page](https://veterans.maryland.gov/lgbtqia-veterans-page). For crisis support, please call the US Department of Veterans Affairs' [Veterans Crisis Line](#), by dialing 988, press #1.

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