

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1543

To amend title 10, United States Code, to prohibit discrimination in the
Armed Forces.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

Ms. STRICKLAND (for herself, Ms. ESCOBAR, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. HORSFORD,
Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. LIEU,
and Mr. VEASEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To amend title 10, United States Code, to prohibit
discrimination in the Armed Forces.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Equal and Uniform
5 Treatment in the Military Act” or the “EQUITY Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Women, Black, Native American, and
2 LGBTQIA+ Americans have served in the Armed
3 Forces since the Revolutionary War.

4 (2) In 1948, 16 years before the enactment of
5 the Civil Rights Act (Public Law 88–352; 78 Stat.
6 241), which desegregated civilian spaces, President
7 Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which allowed
8 Black members of the Armed Forces to serve side-
9 by-side with white members.

10 (3) In 1948, President Truman signed the
11 Women’s Armed Services Integration Act (Public
12 Law 80–625; 62 Stat. 356) into law, officially allow-
13 ing women to serve as full, permanent members of
14 each Armed Force.

15 (4) In 1967, President Johnson signed into law
16 Public Law 90–130, which authorized the promotion
17 of women to the ranks of general and flag officers.

18 (5) In 1972, women were allowed to command
19 units that included men.

20 (6) In 1982, the Department of Defense In-
21 struction 1332.14, “Enlisted Administrative Separations”, banned homosexual individuals from serving
22 in the Armed Forces.

23 (7) In 1993, President Clinton signed into law
24 the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
25

1 Year 1994 (Public Law 103–16), which enacted sec-
2 tion 654 of title 10, United States Code, “Policy
3 concerning homosexuality in the armed forces”, com-
4 monly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”.

5 (8) In 2011, President Obama signed into law
6 the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Act of 2010”, al-
7 lowing homosexual members to openly serve in the
8 Armed Forces.

9 (9) In 2015, the last remaining policy restric-
10 tions on women serving in direct combat roles were
11 removed.

12 (10) In 2021, President Biden issued Executive
13 Order 13988, which rescinded the policy that prohib-
14 ited transgender individuals from serving in the
15 Armed Forces.

16 (11) In 2025, President Trump issued Execu-
17 tive Order 14183, falsely stating that people who are
18 transgender “cannot satisfy the rigorous standards
19 necessary for military service” and that their iden-
20 tity “conflicts with a soldier’s commitment to an
21 honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in
22 one’s personal life.”

23 (12) It should be the policy of the United
24 States that every member of the Armed Forces has
25 the right to serve, advance, and be evaluated based

1 on only individual merit, fitness, capability, and per-
 2 formance, in an environment free of discrimination
 3 on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion,
 4 sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

5 **SEC. 3. NONDISCRIMINATION IN THE ARMED FORCES.**

6 Chapter 49 of title 10, United States Code, is amend-
 7 ed by inserting after section 974 the following new section:

8 **“§ 975. Prohibition on discrimination**

9 “(a) PROHIBITION.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2),
 10 discrimination within the Department of Defense against
 11 an individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, na-
 12 tional origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation, is pro-
 13 hibited.

14 “(2) A qualification established or applied regarding
 15 eligibility for service in an armed force shall take into ac-
 16 count only the ability of an individual to meet—

17 “(A) general occupational standards for mili-
 18 tary service; and

19 “(B) the particular military occupational spe-
 20 cialty.

21 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 “(1) The term ‘gender identity’ means the gen-
 23 der-related identity, appearance, mannerisms, or
 24 other gender-related characteristics of an individual,
 25 regardless of the individual’s designated sex at birth.

1 “(2) The term ‘sex’ includes—

2 “(A) a sex stereotype;

3 “(B) pregnancy, childbirth, or a related
4 medical condition; and

5 “(C) sex characteristics, including intersex
6 traits.

7 “(3) The term ‘sex stereotype’ includes—

8 “(A) stereotypical notions of masculinity or
9 femininity;

10 “(B) an expectation of how an individual
11 represents or communicates their gender to oth-
12 ers through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, activ-
13 ity, voice, mannerism, or body characteristic;

14 “(C) the expectation that an individual will
15 consistently identify with only one gender; and

16 “(D) an expectation regarding the appro-
17 priateness of a role for a certain sex.”.

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