



26 JUNE 2017

The Honorable James Mattis, Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear General Mattis,

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) is concerned about a possible six-month delay in the implementation of Transgender service. As with the implementation of the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, strong leadership from the top is key to the success of the inclusion of new groups of minority service members. AVER is confident that your strong and highly demonstrated leadership will allow the smooth and successful implementation of the new Transgender policy just as your predecessors implemented the repeal of DADT and the inclusion of women in combat units.

As the nation's oldest and largest LGBT Veterans Service Organization AVER is deeply versed in the history and coordination of repeal and integration efforts for LGBT service members both in our own military and the forces of our allies. Currently 19 nations including our United States provide for open Transgender service. Successful implementation of open service for Transgender military volunteers is nothing new. Just as with DADT, if other military forces can implement the inclusion of Transgender service members our military can accomplish inclusion better and faster. Our military is second to none. Our acceptance of the importance of diversity in our ranks is determined.

As during the repeal of DADT, AVER stands ready to provide you with our assistance as our military moves forward with the implementation of full and open Transgender service.

Thank you for your leadership and your many years of service to our great nation.

Steve Loomis
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AVER's mission statement reads: "**Mission** - of AVER is to be a national non-profit, chapter-based service organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender veterans, active duty uniformed service members, families and supporters. As the first to represent the needs of the LGBT military community in our fight against discrimination in military service and benefits, AVER is dedicated to equal rights for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. In the highest traditions of service of American citizen soldiers, we support equal treatment before the law, equal access to benefits, full access to voting rights, non-discrimination in civilian employment and support for the mission and goals of the U.S. Armed Forces."