

# PALM CENTER

BLUEPRINTS FOR SOUND PUBLIC POLICY



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## **Palm Center and ACLU Statements on U.S. Air Force Secretary's Support for Inclusive Policy**

*U.S. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James Voiced Support for Lifting Ban in a [USA Today Story](#)*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** – December 10, 2014 - Earlier today, U.S. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James told *USA Today* the transgender ban currently in place in the U.S. Military should be lifted. James further stated, **"From my point of view, anyone who is capable of accomplishing the job should be able to serve."**

Palm Center director Aaron Belkin offered the following statement:

**"I am encouraged by Air Force Secretary James's announcement today that the Pentagon's ban on military service by transgender personnel will be reviewed soon, and by her statement that, 'anyone who is capable of accomplishing the job should be able to serve.'"**

**"Scholarly research as well as the experiences of 18 foreign militaries that welcome the service of transgender personnel show that an inclusive policy will strengthen our military."**

**"Air Force Secretary James's comments today are a positive step, but President Obama is the Commander-in-Chief and is ultimately responsible for setting policy, and it is imperative for him to clarify his position as well."**

Ian Thompson, ACLU Legislative Representative, issued the following statement:

**“Today’s comments from Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James provide further proof that it is only a question of when, not if, the outdated, discriminatory ban on transgender troops will be lifted. Ending this senseless discrimination – as many of our closest allies have already done – is something that our military can do. What has been lacking to date is the will to do so. It is time for President Obama and the leadership of the Defense Department – both civilian and uniformed – to take the necessary steps to ensure that this ban will be lifted, so that all of those who are capable of accomplishing the job will have an opportunity to serve.”**

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**About the Palm Center**

*The Palm Center is committed to sponsoring state-of-the-art scholarship to enhance the quality of public dialogue about critical and controversial issues of the day. For the past decade, the Palm Center's research on sexual minorities in the military has been published in leading social scientific journals. The Palm Center seeks to be a resource for university-affiliated as well as independent scholars, students, journalists, opinion leaders, and members of the public. For more information, see [www.palmcenter.org](http://www.palmcenter.org)*

**About the ACLU**

*For nearly 100 years, the ACLU has been our nation’s guardian of liberty, working in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country. Whether it’s achieving full equality for the LGBT community, establishing new privacy protections for our digital age, ending mass incarceration, or preserving the right to vote or the right to have an abortion, the ACLU takes up the toughest civil liberties cases and issues to defend all people from government abuse and overreach. With more than a million members, activists, and supporters, the ACLU is a nationwide organization that fights tirelessly in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., for the principle that every individual’s rights must be protected equally under the law, regardless of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.*