



SPARTA Pride Talking Points

Last updated: March 11, 2026

About SPARTA Pride

- Founded in 2013, SPARTA Pride is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that advocates and supports transgender service members, veterans, families, and allies.
- SPARTA is home to a menu of community support programs:
 - Private support groups and forums
 - The organization offers microgrants to members in need
 - Educates stakeholders and the public about our community
- SPARTA advocates along many lines of effort:
 - Education to lawmakers and leaders for open transgender military service
 - Communication support for compelling storytelling
 - Litigation support for information and member support
- We currently have over 2,500 members in our community.
- We are the only organization focused solely on advocacy for trans service members, veterans, and military hopefuls.

Key Points

- Cruelty is the point of the DoD policy
 - After every court appearance with the DOJ, the DoD moves the goal post and implements harsher punishment and restrictions on service members.
- Worse than DADT
 - Troops are asked annually through the medical system if they are transgender
 - This puts them in an ethical dilemma:
 - Tell the truth and get kicked out or go against their values and lie.
 - After lying, they could be discovered and be subject to non-judicial punishment, with a chapter risking an honorable discharge.
- Commands and leaders in the Middle East with the current conflict with Iran are reaching out to Transgender Service Members, saying, “We could really use your help over here.”
 - The Ban was never about readiness, as it is clear our teams need us.
 - Trans people are currently supporting the engagement in the Middle East, while actively being purged by the same administration who started the conflict.
- SPARTA’s fight against the ban stands as a testimony of resilience.
 - Transgender Service members were the first group of people to fight for their rights against the cruel policies of this administration.
 - Many of them are still in service, fighting against involuntary separation proceedings over a year later.

About Trans Troops

- We are not victims. We are not survivors. **We are fighters.**
- There are currently thousands of transgender service members
[We do not encourage an exact number due to competing surveys and statistics, and not to minimize the thousands of gender diverse troops who are living stealth or concealing their authentic self in fear of discrimination and/or retribution]
- Trans people **have already proven** for the last decade of open service that they are qualified and capable. Many of our members have been serving openly since lifting the ban on transgender service members in 2016.
- **We are deployable and have proven it.** Some of our members were pulled off deployments, including downrange and in austere environments, just to be told they're not deployable. Even in Talbott court hearings, it was revealed that trans people are more deployable on average since we're more proactive with our health.

High-level Themes about the Ban

- **This isn't just about trans people; we were the canaries in the coal mine.** The result? A domino effect of meaningless changes to grooming standards under the guise of readiness, then shaving waivers impacting BIPOC men, and now women in combat arms.
- We also see increasing attacks, legislative and otherwise, on those groups in the civilian world.
- **The cruelty is the point.** From the beginning, the EO and policy explicitly questioned our honesty, integrity, humility, courage, and modesty. As the policy evolved, the goalposts kept moving, with increasingly cruel requirements and indignities. For example:
 - Adding punitive separation codes that, for officers, say we could be a threat to national security
 - We're being denied Skill Bridge programs without explanation
 - TERA (early retirement) was offered for those with between 15 and 18 years of service, then taken away. Some of our members' retirements were approved, then rescinded. Others were denied without explanation, even though the service member was weeks to months from 18 years of service.
 - We are being forced to appear in dress and regs of our birth sex if we want to attend our own separation board hearings.
 - We've been stuck at home on administrative leave for months, unable to contribute to our team or serve our country, leaving our units understaffed
 - Our gender markers were changed in both the military system and the VA system without our consent – even if it's different from all our federal documents
- **This was a bait-and-switch.** In prior policies, including the same president's last ban, we *had* to obtain a gender dysphoria diagnosis to serve openly and receive care. Now, any history of that diagnosis is grounds for separating us, even though many of us transitioned years ago and haven't experienced gender dysphoria in a very long time. (Can you add that gender dysphoria is highly treatable and typically goes away when someone can transition and live as their whole selves?)

- **They say they want merit and that the most qualified people should serve, so why kick out people who have proven themselves?** Many of our members are high achievers, earning numerous medals, awards, and promotions. I want to win our wars with the best team possible. Don't you?
- **The ban is grounded in incorrect information and hypocrisy.** We're being told we aren't mentally capable of serving, but being trans is not a mental illness. We're being told we're nondeployable as we're being pulled off deployments. We're told we're disqualified due to medical conditions, but aren't allowed a medical board or retirement for said condition.

What's next/our long-term Vision

- Our long-term goal is to **enshrine open trans service into law**. This includes veterans' rights and a practical medical policy divorced from administrative and legal burdens. We can only stop this game of executive-order ping-pong when our ability to serve is codified in legislation. Ideally, we can codify LGBTQIA+ and women's services simultaneously to protect the broader community.
- We must see the VA return to being an inclusive environment, putting Directive 1341 back into place and allowing gender-affirming care again.
- Trans service members should not fear for their safety in non-inclusive states and should be afforded the same right to healthcare.
- Restorative justice: Eventually, we will need to help facilitate a class action lawsuit, like Don't Ask, Don't Tell, to ensure our community's service records and benefits are restored.

How can allies help?

- Hire them, consider them for training programs
- Pro bono or discounted mental and medical health care
- Help them find affordable housing
- Donate to organizations that fight for them, like SPARTA Pride
- Correct misinformation
- Speak up for them if you've worked with them
- Share their stories

Questions: inquiries@spartapride.org