

PALM CENTER

BLUEPRINTS FOR SOUND PUBLIC POLICY

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Palm Center Announces Symposium to Mark One Year Since Pentagon's Promise to Review Transgender Ban

Six Months After Deadline, Event Will Feature Retired General and Flag Officers and Transgender Service Members in Limbo Awaiting New Policy

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - [The Palm Center](#) announced plans today for a symposium in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, July 13 to mark the one-year anniversary of Defense Secretary Ashton Carter's creation of a working group charged with studying how to end the military's transgender service ban. The recommendations for ending the ban were due in January 2016, the six-month deadline set by Secretary Carter.

On July 13, 2015, Secretary Carter announced that **"DoD will create a working group to study over the next six months the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly."** The six-month deadline passed without explanation and Secretary Carter has yet to announce whether or when the ban will be lifted.

"The July 13 symposium will be an opportunity to examine the research on implementation, to hear directly from transgender troops and to outline best practices and next steps if and when the ban is lifted," said Palm Center Director [Aaron Belkin](#). **"It will underscore that current military policy has ongoing implications for troops in limbo, and that detailed answers have been provided to all questions about how to implement inclusive policy."**

The Palm Center symposium will feature presentations on evidence-based best practices that have been identified in scholarly research and by organizations that allow transgender service, including foreign militaries, federal agencies, and police and fire departments. It will also document the experiences of transgender troops who have been waiting in limbo for a new policy announcement.

In February, former Acting Under Secretary of Defense Brad Carson announced that the repeal working group was aware of at least 77 transgender service members who identified themselves to commanders in anticipation of the new policy. The symposium's list of speakers will be announced in the coming weeks,

and is scheduled to include Congressional leaders, retired General and Flag Officers, transgender service members, and scholarly experts.

A Palm Center commission including three retired General Officers studied every aspect of repealing the transgender ban and issued a March 2014 [report](#) concluding that **“formulating and implementing inclusive policy [for transgender service members] is administratively feasible and neither excessively complex nor burdensome.”** More recently, the RAND Corporation conducted extensive [research](#) on the repeal of the ban and concluded that inclusive policy would not compromise readiness or unit cohesion.

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About The Palm Center:

The Palm Center is an independent research institute committed to sponsoring state-of-the-art scholarship to enhance the quality of public dialogue about critical and controversial issues of the day. Our research has been published in leading social scientific journals and extensively consulted and cited by the US military and others. The Palm Center seeks to be a resource for scholars, policymakers, journalists, opinion leaders, students and the public at large. For more information, visit us at www.palmcenter.org.