

January 12, 2017

To the Honorable Members of the United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Request to Senators to Question General Mattis, Nominee for Secretary of Defense on his Commitment to LGBT Service Members

Dear Senators,

LGBT Americans have fought and died for their country since its founding, but it has only been in the past five years that they have been able to openly serve in the US military. Indeed, as many as 100,000 active service members were expelled for being LGBT between World War II and the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell in 2011. Many received less-than-honorable discharges, leaving careers and lives in ruin. Secretaries Panetta, Hagel and Carter made profound progress in ending LGBT discrimination in the military, starting with a repeal of Don't Act Don't Tell, the addition of sexual orientation to the Human Goals Charter, and the inclusion of legally-married, same-sex couples under DoD's Family and Medical Leave Act rules. And as of October 2016, transgender service members can serve openly.

We are writing today to request, in today's confirmation hearing and subsequent individual meetings, that you ask nominee Mattis whether he will continue to pursue the policies set forth by Secretaries Panetta, Hagel and Carter that allow openly LGBT people to serve in the US military by posing the following questions to him:

- Does he believe that a fully inclusive military establishment builds a stronger and more ready force? Does he commit to the continued inclusion of open LGBT service members, and if so, does he intend to express this commitment throughout the ranks?
- In June 2016, Secretary Carter set forth a timetable to fully integrate transgender service members within 24 months: a 9-month training of the full force, an initial accession policy to begin no later than June 2017, and a full accession standard for transgender service members implemented by June 2018. Is nominee Mattis committed to fully integrating transgender service members as part of this resilient force, and does he intend to adhere to the timetable?

Equality California is making these requests because of the importance of maintaining existing DoD policies that protect LGBT service members and their families, and to provide for a secure environment for future LGBT recruits.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director
Equality California



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