

# *The Lamp Post*

Shining the light in the dark  
for trans service members & veterans



**FEB 2025**

Mid-Month Issue



# Addressing the Community

For the last few months, my focus has been on the preservation of life. And, while that's important, I think it's time to go a step further and focus not just on our *survival*, but our *joy*. As trans people, we have a history of thriving in the face of adversity. In the face of overwhelming political power that is relentlessly bombarding us with attacks, erasure, bigotry, and fear, our resistance is our joy, our happiness, our love, our successes, and the bonds that we share as a community.

Those who know me know I'm a history nerd, and I recently remembered a quote from the AIDS crisis. "**Bury your friends in the morning, protest in the afternoon, and dance all night. And it was the dancing that kept us in the fight.**"

There's a lot that's up in the air right now, and a lot of bad things happening/coming. It's not going to get easier or better any time soon. Joy is going to be difficult, but it's worth it. Being able to hold onto happiness and community are imperative for mental health, resilience, willpower, and survival. There are times and places for sorrow, frustration, anger, indignation, and pain. There are times when you need to focus on the mission at hand. But both depend on your ability to find that sense of community and joy in the face of our adversity.

Joy leads to hope. And hope has a history of getting folks through the impossible.

As I always say:

*Expect the worst; Hope for the best; Fight to bridge the gap.*

-Catie

# Taking STOCC

(Summarized Totality of Community Circumstances)

S2 Team

## BLUF:

The landscape has changed significantly. Wins have been taken by both sides, but we remain in a strategically advantageous position.

## BACKGROUND:

POTUS and SECDEF have aggressively pursued policies surrounding our community but have faced significant pushback from multiple directions. Initial hearings for *TALBOTT V TRUMP* have been had and the Preliminary Injunction will be heard on 18 FEB 2025 @ 1000 EST. Multiple states have filed “friend of the court” briefs, stating that the impact of this ban will irreparably harm their ability to retain and recruit national guard members. *SHILLING V TRUMP* is still waiting an initial hearing. The Administration has been able to stop all gender affirming surgery, including those on SHCP waiver, as well as pausing accessions (new recruits) as well as no longer allowing members to start HRT. As of this time, commands have been placed on notice not to proceed with any admin or medical separations in DoD. We are unaware of any effort on this like in DHS for the US Coast Guard, but will maintain vigilance.

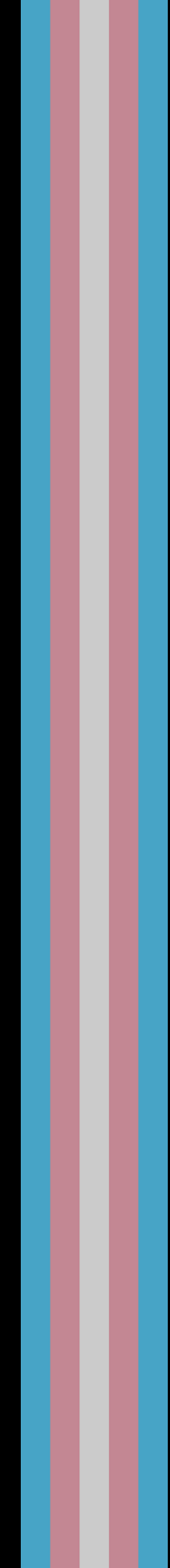
### ANALYSIS:

Both sides are currently in place. The likelihood of a Preliminary Injunction is high; Judge Ana Reyes has remained steadfast that if this order seems to be motivated by “animus” rather than a rational need on the government’s part, then she will most likely find that the argument is likely to succeed and an injunction is necessary. The addition of multiple states asking for this in an amicus brief only bolsters that, as well as POTUS’ own words in his recent “Make America Healthy Again” executive order, in which he argues that already 77% of young people in the US are not qualified to serve, creating recruiting issues. Members in congress are calling for a repeal of this targeted discrimination, and the SECDEF is being protested in Europe as he travels, by students and family.

The Administration is fighting against n multiple fronts right now, with classified information leaks, breaches of secure payment information, scandals about DOGE members, 10 pending injunctions, resignations at DOJ because of politically motivated prosecutorial decisions, and many many other things. Too many irons to keep focus on one. This can only play to our advantage as they continue to lose credibility with average Americans. This directly hinders his ability to implement his policies; as the switchboards to congress are overwhelmed, there is rumor that Republicans are getting nervous about the drastic drop in popularity for POTUS and his advisors while still in the “Honeymoon” phase, usually the first 6-9 months of a presidency.

## RECOMMENDATION:

1. Contact your elected representatives (<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>) and have your family and friends do the same. Make sure you mention your demographics and specifically what policies you are upset about. For example, “My name is xxx xxxxx and I’m a Registered Republican who voted for Donald Trump. I did NOT vote for him to spend money targeting Transgender people or renaming everything, I voted for him to support our country and bring down prices. I want you to stop sending bills that will make it harder for me to vote as a woman. I am seriously considering voting for someone else in the next election”. Call every day if you can.
2. Maintain your military bearing. This time is crucial and we cannot afford any incidents that paint us in a negative light. Do NOT argue with your chain of command; assert your rights under the UCMJ but maintain discipline.
3. Limit the rumor mill. The opposition is flooding the zone with misinformation in an attempt to promote panic and chaos. Do not let them. Bring any info you want checked through your regional leads to the S2 and we will push out info as available.
4. Maintain SA on our AOR. While the developments in medical and social realms impact our lives deeply, we have to focus our attention on our side of the complex. Trust the experts in the medical and legal fields to fight the battles for Stonewall remembrance, for transgender youth care, and for our allies in the peace corps as well as all the other numerous areas, just as they trust us to maintain ours.
5. Hold out hope to those who need it when you can. This organization and our peers are here to hold us together. Let us build a refuge for all who seek peace and rest, and a bulwark against bigotry, hatred and intolerance. We will survive this together.



# Strength in Transition: Managing Fear and Stress as a Trans Military Member

Kitra

Serving in the military comes with unique challenges—physical demands, strict regulations, and high expectations. Being transgender in the military adds another layer of complexity, with policy changes, unit dynamics, and concerns about current political changes weighing heavily on the mind. **Stress and fear can be constant, but they don't have to control you.**

Here's how to manage them effectively while staying mission-ready and true to yourself.



# 1. Acknowledge Your Reality with Strength

The military trains you to push through discomfort, but emotional resilience doesn't mean suppressing your feelings. If you're experiencing stress, anxiety, or fear, **acknowledge it with discipline and self-compassion:**

When doubts creep in, reframe them:  
“Yes, this is difficult, but I have overcome worse.”

Journal or talk to a trusted mentor—bottling up emotions can lead to burnout.

## 2. Control the Controllables

You can't always control policies, leadership attitudes, or even how your peers react. But you can control:

Your mindset:

- Focus on **your capabilities**, not external negativity.

Your professionalism:

- **Maintain excellence** in your role to command respect.

Your support network:

- **Identify allies** within your unit and LGBTQ+ military groups.

When feeling overwhelmed, ask: Is this within my control? If not, redirect your energy elsewhere.



### 3. Tactical Grounding: Managing Stress in the Moment

When fear or stress spikes—whether before a fitness test, in a briefing, or in an unfamiliar unit—use quick grounding techniques:

1. **Box Breathing** (used by special forces for stress control): Inhale for 4 seconds → hold for 4 → exhale for 4 → hold for 4. Repeat.
2. **Environmental Awareness** : Observe details in your surroundings to stay present and calm.
3. **Physical Reset** : Clench your fists, then release. Repeat with other muscles to reduce tension.

## 4. Build Your Unit of Support

Even if policies fluctuate, **personal connections remain powerful**. Build a network of:

- **Trusted peers** who respect you as a soldier first.
- **LGBTQ+ military groups** like SPART\*A (Service Members, Partners, Allies for Respect and Tolerance for All) and TMH (Trans Military Hub).
- **Mental health resources** available through the VA and DoD.

Having even one or two people who “get it” can make a world of difference.

## 5. Regulate Media and Information Intake

Anti-trans rhetoric can be a constant stressor, especially when military policies are debated. You don't have to consume it all.

**Set limits on doom-scrolling**—negative news doesn't prepare you; it drains you.

**Balance** tough realities with affirming stories of trans service members thriving.

Stay **informed, but not consumed** by policy discussions. Focus on what affects you directly.

## 6. Take Care of Your Body—Your Most Vital Asset

Your body is your tool in service. Keeping it strong and healthy supports both your **career and mental well-being**:

- **Fuel wisely** : Maintain a diet that sustains your energy and hormone levels (if applicable).
- **Physical conditioning** : Find a routine that fits your needs and goals.
- **Sleep discipline** : Fatigue makes stress harder to handle. Prioritize rest when possible.

Your fitness and readiness belong to you, regardless of others' opinions.

# 7. Develop Personal Rituals for Stability

Military life can be unpredictable. Creating **personal rituals** reinforces stability:

- A morning routine to **start the day with control.**
- An evening wind-down to **signal safety and rest.**
- **Affirming habits** (even small ones like a favorite playlist, grooming routine, or a moment of reflection).

Consistency in small areas builds confidence in bigger ones.

## 8. Seek Mental Health Support Without Stigma

There's strength in **knowing when to ask for help**. Military culture can make seeking mental health support feel difficult, but it's a sign of resilience—not weakness.

- Military OneSource offers **confidential counseling**.
- Many **VA providers are trans-affirming**—seek one that understands your experience.
- SPART\*A and OutServe-SLDN offer **peer support** from those who've walked this path.

Your **mental well-being** is as **mission-critical** as your physical fitness.

# Final Thoughts: Your Strength is Valid

As a trans service member, you're navigating a **unique battlefield**—one that requires resilience, self-discipline, and support. Fear and stress are natural, but they don't define you.

Your skills, professionalism, and integrity **speak louder than bias ever could**. Keep moving forward—you are part of something bigger, and your service **matters**.



# The Benchwarmer: Brief Legal Primer

Ryan G.

There are two primary cases working their ways through the federal courts that are challenging **E.O. 14183**:

1. **Talbott v. Trump** (Filed on 28 January in the District of Columbia)
2. **Shilling v. Trump** (Filed on 6 February in the Western District of Washington)

Both cases seek the same ends but have a few differences in strategy. First, let's talk about what we (the plaintiffs) aim to do in both cases: Strike down E.O. 14183 and all resulting DoD policy as unconstitutionally discriminatory under the **5th Amendment** and **14th Amendment**.

In the short term, they are both seeking a **preliminary injunction**: a special remedy to stop any policy from taking effect before the primary arguments take place in the cases. To win the preliminary injunction the plaintiffs need to show that:

1. They are **likely to succeed** on their discrimination claims.
2. Transgender service members are likely to suffer **irreparable injury without an injunction**.
3. The **balance of equities** (fairness) favors an injunction.
4. The **public interest** favors an injunction.
5. Injunctive relief is **necessary to prevent irreparable harm**.

This is the same standard that the plaintiffs won on back in 2017, against a ban that was less severe. We expect a similar initial result and will need to follow developments as the government appeals any injunction up to the Supreme Court of the United States.

# Community Spotlight

The Community Spotlight for this issue is on Sam Rodriguez!

They will be meeting with Rep. Sara Jacobs to discuss the harmful impact of the recent executive orders reinstating the transgender military ban. She wants to hear your stories to understand how these policies are affecting real people.

Sam is collecting personal stories, especially from transgender service members directly impacted. Your story may also be shared anonymously to raise awareness and push for change.

Submit a one-page statement that outlines your experience, your concern, and any proposed solutions, and send it to [sam.rodriquez@spartapride.org](mailto:sam.rodriquez@spartapride.org) by February 18!

Sample email [here](#).

Contact TMH Staff for [Future Submissions](#).

# Upcoming Events

- Movie Nights & Game Nights
  - Recurring; See events calendar
- Hangouts
  - Recurring; Friday Nights
- TMH Town Hall Schedule
  - 22MAR25 @ 1430 EST
  - 26APR25 @ 1430 EST
  - 24MAY25 @ 1430 EST
  - 28JUN25 @ 1430 EST (Stonewall Day)
- *Talbott* Hearing - 18FEB25 @ 1000EST
  - Public Access telephone number is 1-833-990-9400, and the access code is 787605272
- Cashier Awards @ HRC HQ, DC
  - 29MAR2025 | More to Follow on Streaming
- Trans Day of Visibility
  - 31MAR2025

To subscribe in an email, click [here](#).

To share a feedback, click [here](#).

# How to Exercise Your Rights

1. Stop answering questions and volunteering information
2. Say “I am exercising my Fifth Amendment Rights”
3. Say “I want to speak with a lawyer before any further questioning”
4. Say “I want to end the interrogation now.”
5. Stop talking and remove yourself from the situation.

# How to Exercise Your Rights

## Warnings!

Ask a military attorney if they are a defense attorney and if your conversation is confidential.

Command Legal Officers work for the commander, not you – anything you say to them may be used against you.

Anything you say to military doctors and psychologists may be used against you. Do not assume confidentiality.

Some military chaplains leak personal information that can be used against service members. See a defense attorney, not a chaplain, for legal issue.

Statements to friends, family, civilians, and military police can be used against you.

Computer based systems, texts, chats, and workplace emails may be used against you. Personal use of work computers violates most policies, is a bad practice, and is not confidential.

Personal items at work, such as diaries, letters, photos, and computer files may be used against you.

# Know Your Rights - Protect Yourself

If you are questioned about your gender identity, medical history, etc. remember that you have rights under the UCMJ. You are not obligated to answer questions that could incriminate you or lead to disciplinary action.

You have the right to...

- Remain silent and decline to sign any statement that could be used against you (Article 31)
- Legal counsel – consult with a military defense attorney or civilian counsel before answering any questions
  - **Waiving your rights may have significant or adverse consequences!**
- Decline to consent to search or seizure - when asked to provide access to personal medical records, electronic devices, or other private information, etc., consult with legal counsel first

Do not make assumptions about confidentiality!

This is not an exhaustive list of all of your rights!

<https://modernmilitary.org/report-an-incident>

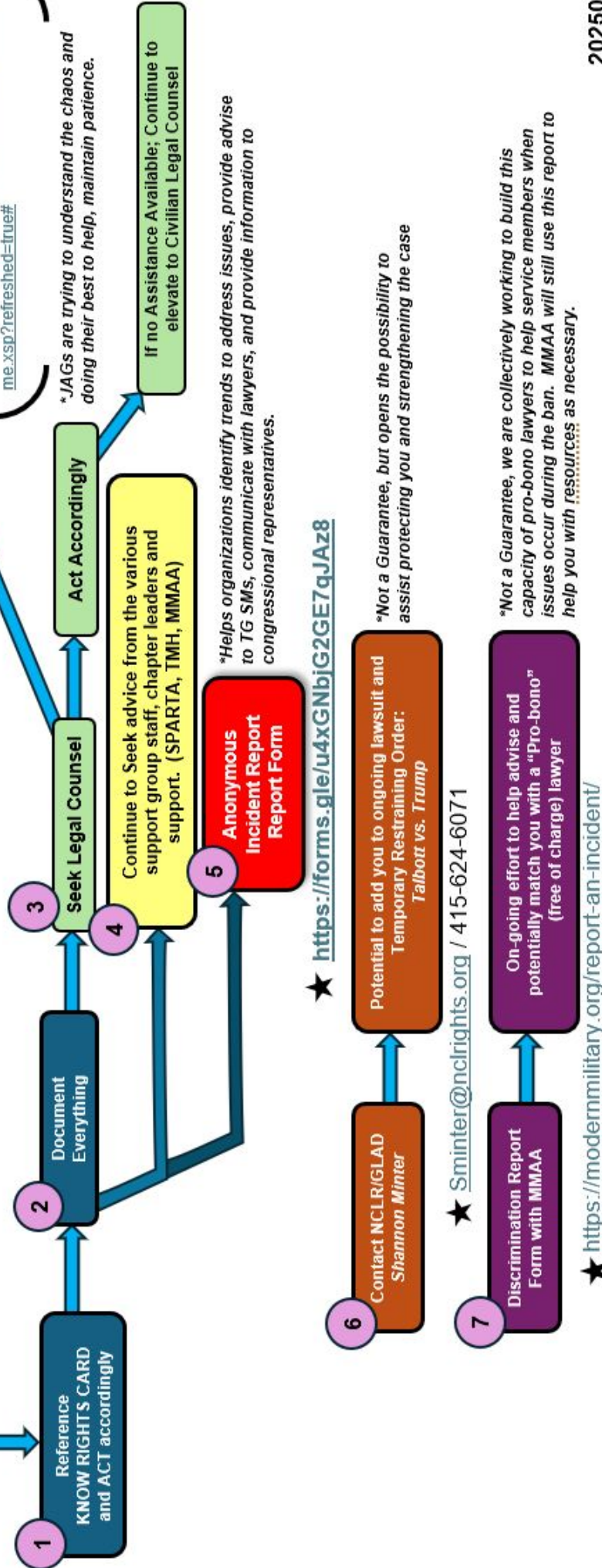


# PREMATURE ENFORCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE ORDER?



## WHAT QUALIFIES AS AN INCIDENT? (INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO)?

- Denied Healthcare / Surgery?
- Denied changing GM, ETP, or reversal of Gender Marker Change?
- Told to revert to go to your old pronouns?
- Told to use the Facilities that do not align with your Gender Marker in DEERS?
- Executive orders are not policy; anything that violates standing policy/directives!



## Trial Defense Resources

### Department of the Air Force

[https://www.afiaq.af.mil/portals/77/documents/JA/JD/AD/C\\_Contacts.pdf?ver=2020-02-19-155833-62Z](https://www.afiaq.af.mil/portals/77/documents/JA/JD/AD/C_Contacts.pdf?ver=2020-02-19-155833-62Z)

### Department of the Navy

<https://www.iaq.navy.mil/legal-services/dso/>

### US Marine Corps

<https://www.DSO.marines.mil>

### Department of the Army

<https://www.iaqnet.army.mil/Sites/USATDS.nsf/ho me.xsp?refreshed=true#>

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(Or just Print)



# Coalition Fundraiser

Want to show your support for transgender service members? The Coalition fundraising team (SPARTA, MMAA, MV) have a new collaboration with LA-based designer Mars Wright!

<https://militarytransrights.org/shop>

*The money goes towards legal teams, grants, education, etc. that all help our fight. Our ally organizations are working together to distribute funds where they're needed, so help out if you can.*

