

# *The Lamp Post*

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



Issue No.

10

MAY 2025



# Addressing the Community

We've been experiencing a time of chaotic and inconsistent enforcement of policies. As the fight devolves to require more individual participation, the chaos increases. But we've been preparing for this.

Continue to monitor the announcements. We're pushing out information relating to separations, medical care, involvement for veterans, VA info, and resources for getting out of the military.

The future is going to look like us getting the victories where we can - even if we have to carve them out ourselves. We will continue to lean heavily on community. J2 and the newsletter aren't going anywhere. We're revamping localization to accommodate for the mass-discharges.

The biggest mistake the administration can make is to remove the legal constraints of a large demographic that knows how to organize, communicate, adapt, and execute an objective. I fully intend for TMH to honor that commitment and expose that mistake.

**Operate in the gray area.** Make ambiguity your friend where you can. Charge forward until you're stopped: and then, find another way around.

As I always say:

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



-Catie

# QUEER HISTORY

Rosa Bonheur ( 16 MAR 1822 - 25 MAY 1899 )

Born Marie-Rosalie Bonheur in Bordeaux, France, Rosa was a well-known painter of animals (known as animalière). She did realism-styled sculptures, but truly was more known for the paintings. She is considered to be the richest and most well-known female painter in the 19th century. Her passion for art was encouraged by her father - who was also a painter - and he supported her talents and independence. Her painting ‘ The Horse Fair’ (1853, New York, Met), skyrocketed her to international fame. She was 19 when she exhibited this at the Paris Salon.

Bonheur did all the things typically reserved for men. Hunting, smoking, wearing trousers and shirts and ties - she did it all. She challenged the societal norms of her time, a time where the “decree concerning the cross-dressing of women” was in effect in France (this lasted from 1800 to 2013). She stated that wearing men’s clothes gave her a sense of identity as it allowed her to openly show that she would not comply with society’s gender-binary structure. Also at this time, there was the lesbian stereotype of women who had short hair, wore trousers, and chain-smoked (she did all three!).

While not having explicitly stating she was a lesbian, her female partners certainly suggested that she may have been. Her partners included Nathalie Micas and Anna Elizabeth Klumpke, following the death of Micas. Klumpke and Bonheur stayed in touch for many years, and Klumpke eventually went to France to paint a portrait of Bonheur. The artists remained together in their chateau until Bonheur’s death in 1899.

Rosa Bonheur decided she would never be an appendage to a man, never rely on them, and instead chose the support of her female partners, and to lean on herself.

Her in death at the age of 77 did not mean the end of her legacy. Her life and way of life made the way for other queer female artists who did not fit in with society, or did not conform to society.



# QUEER HISTORY

Marie-Rosalie Bonheur



# Community Spotlight:

## SPARTA/Plume Partnership

On 22 MAY, SPARTA partnered with Plume - a service that provides access to gender-affirming hormone therapy and everyday care, as stated on their home page. Plume also offers Transition Support, Mental Health services, Sexual Health services, and others.

For more information, see the attachments at the end of the newsletter.



The flyer features a purple and teal color scheme with a background of purple handprints. At the top, the Plume and SPARTA logos are displayed. The main title is 'Gender-affirming HRT and everyday care'. Below this, a text block states: 'SPARTA has partnered with Plume Health, a virtual gender-affirming care clinic exclusively for trans and gender non-conforming folks.' A yellow box highlights the pricing: '\$32/mo + copay with insurance (\$99/mo self pay)'. The flyer is divided into two columns: 'Plume Membership:' and 'Copay (or included with self-pay):'. The membership column lists benefits like educational resources, support groups, and access to discounts. The copay column lists services like video appointments, prescriptions, lab orders, and clinical support. Below these columns, a row of buttons lists services: 'GENDER-AFFIRMING HRT', 'MENTAL HEALTH CARE', 'SEXUAL HEALTH', 'ACNE', 'ALLERGIES', and 'AND MORE!'. The bottom section includes a photo of a diverse group of people, a call to action to get started at getplume.co, a discount code 'SPARTA-15-2025' for 15% off per month, and a QR code linking to getplume.co.

**plume** | **SPARTA**

### Gender-affirming HRT and everyday care

SPARTA has partnered with **Plume Health**, a virtual gender-affirming care clinic exclusively for trans and gender non-conforming folks.

Get **trans-centered care** from a trusted source of community and support.

**\$32/mo + copay with insurance (\$99/mo self pay)**

**Plume Membership:**

- Transition and gender-inclusive health educational resources
- Support groups and opportunities to connect with others in the trans community
- Recommendations of local and national organizations for other aid or assistance
- Access to exclusive partnerships and discounts
- Exclusive community platform for trans-focused events, discussions and more

**Copay (or included with self-pay):**

- Video appointments with a healthcare provider
- Provider-written prescriptions for related medications
- Ordering, analysis, and cost of certain labs in states that are applicable
- A trans-focused clinical team to support you at every step
- Letters of support for surgery, name or gender marker changes
- Ongoing medical progress monitoring

**It's trans-centered care + everyday wellness:**

GENDER-AFFIRMING HRT   MENTAL HEALTH CARE   SEXUAL HEALTH   ACNE   ALLERGIES   AND MORE!

Get started at [getplume.co](https://getplume.co)

Use CODE: **SPARTA-15-2025** and save 15% per month



[getplume.co](https://getplume.co)

**For Additional Information:**  
<https://getplume.co>

Contact TMH Staff or Sylvie on the TMH Discord for [Future Submissions](#).

# Kitra's Corner

## The Politics of Visibility: When Being Seen Hurts More Than Helps

A few weeks ago, I found myself sitting in an ER in a state that's actively trying to legislate people like me out of public life. I didn't correct the triage nurse when they misgendered my husband. I didn't make a scene. I just gently used the right pronouns while speaking, and watched a moment of recognition unfold. She adjusted. She showed us kindness. She saw us.

But I also knew that kindness isn't guaranteed. In 2025, being visible as a transgender person is complicated. Sometimes it opens doors. Sometimes it opens fire. And more often than not, it puts us in the impossible position of needing to be seen to be supported, while knowing that being seen is what makes us a target in the first place.

Visibility is not safety. It's not justice. It's a tool—one we've had to learn to wield carefully.

## Visibility as Power

Trans visibility has exploded in the past decade. We've appeared on magazine covers, in political debates, on runways, and in major motion pictures. We've led protests, published books, testified before Congress. For many of us, seeing trans people in public roles offered something we never had growing up: proof that we're not alone.

Representation matters. It fosters empathy, broadens understanding, and chips away at ignorance. According to GLAAD's 2023 report, media portrayals of trans people—when respectful—can reduce bias and increase public support for trans rights (GLAAD, 2023). Visibility also helps build community and draw attention to the systems that harm us. When we are seen, our issues can no longer be dismissed as abstract.

But visibility is only powerful when it's paired with protection. And that's where the cracks begin to show.



## Visibility as Risk

Increased visibility has coincided with a disturbing rise in anti-trans violence and political backlash. According to the Human Rights Campaign, 2023 saw the highest number of recorded fatal violence against transgender people in the U.S.—and those are just the cases we know about (HRC, 2024). Visibility doesn't just attract allies; it attracts those who feel threatened by our existence.

The media often frames trans people not as community members, but as controversies. We become “debates,” “ideological battlegrounds,” or “culture war flashpoints”—and in doing so, we are dehumanized. Even in workplaces or healthcare settings, being out can mean being perceived as disruptive, political, or “too much.”

Data from the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey showed that nearly one-third of respondents who were out or perceived as trans at work experienced mistreatment, including being fired, denied promotions, or harassed (James et al., 2016). That was nearly a decade ago. In the current environment, the stakes have only grown.

Visibility can be a survival tool—but it can also feel like walking a tightrope with no net.

## Navigating the Visibility Trap

Many of us learn to gauge our surroundings with surgical precision. Do I correct the receptionist? Do I speak up when my identity is erased? Do I put my pronouns in my bio—knowing that might invite harassment?

We talk about strategic disclosure, about being “out” on our own terms—but even that language hides the emotional labor underneath. Being visible isn't just about being seen. It's about being vulnerable, being politicized, and being forced to carry the weight of representation for everyone who can't speak.

Some of us choose to stay quiet. Others speak loud. Neither choice is more valid than the other. Safety isn't weakness. Silence isn't shame. We each navigate the trap in our own way.

## Reclaiming the Narrative

What visibility should mean is control. Control over how we are represented, when we're seen, and why. Community-driven media, grassroots storytelling, and peer networks are one way we reclaim that power. Being visible doesn't have to mean being exposed. It can mean being recognized—on our terms.

Not everyone is called to be a pioneer. Not everyone wants to carry the weight of the movement on their shoulders. You don't owe anyone your visibility—not your job, not your state, not your family. And you're not “less brave” for choosing to survive quietly.

For those of us who are visible, we carry the responsibility to make space for those who aren't. That means not shaming others for being quiet. That means building protective networks. That means telling the truth without demanding that others bleed to prove it.

### **Conclusion: Visibility Shouldn't Be a Requirement for Rights**

Visibility can be a form of power. But it should never be a requirement for dignity, safety, or basic human rights. You are not more valid because you are out, or loud, or known. You are valid because you are you.

For me, being visible isn't just about advocacy. It's about trying to shape the world I wish had existed when I was younger. But I won't lie—it comes at a cost. It means sometimes holding my breath in an ER. It means wondering who is watching. It means calculating whether I'm making things safer—or just making myself a target.

So here's the truth: whatever visibility means for you, I hope you claim it with clarity and care. You do not have to be seen to matter. And you are not alone—whether in the spotlight or in the quiet shadows we carve for ourselves to survive.

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### References

GLAAD. (2023). Where We Are on TV Report – 2022–2023. Retrieved from <https://glaad.org/publications/whereweareontv-22-23>

Human Rights Campaign. (2024). Fatal Violence Against the Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Community in 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/fatal-violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2023>

James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. National Center for Transgender Equality. Retrieved from <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>



# Taking STOCC

(Summarized Totality of Community Circumstances)

J2 Team

## Last Two Weeks:

Over the past two weeks, we've seen a rapid escalation in the implementation of the ban and purge. SCOTUS lifted the protections that had been holding the ban at bay, and DOD wasted no time setting new deadlines for voluntary separation: June 6 for active duty, July 7 for Reserve/Guard. Many of us are already feeling the impact as the Army and other branches begin updating records to reflect only sex assigned at birth, including how we are addressed in official communications and which facilities we can use. Commanders are now required to actively screen for gender dysphoria during routine medical exams. Even those of us who have not self-ID'd are at risk of being flagged and targeted for separation based on past statements, social media posts, or Commanders' intuition.

On the legal front, our allies in Shilling and Talbott are continuing the fight, arguing that the ban is rooted in discrimination and pushing for injunctions to halt or reverse the policy. In Congress, supportive lawmakers have introduced legislation to block the ban, but the political terrain remains challenging to say the least.

# Taking STOCC (cont.)

## Next Two Weeks

Expect more activity as the June 6 deadline approaches. Active-duty members who do not self-ID and begin the voluntary separation process will likely face involuntary discharge procedures. DEERS marker changes will likely start being reversed, and increased scrutiny from leadership will continue, creating a climate of uncertainty and anxiety across our formations. Medical screenings and record reviews will persist, and the risk of suddenly being placed on admin leave pending separation will remain high.

We're also seeing reports that DHA is rolling back access to endocrinology and other medically necessary care for those of us already on medications or seeing physicians for gender-affirming care. In many cases, people are being cut off from care without notice. If you're currently on medication or receiving any other ongoing care, reach out to your provider as soon as possible to verify your referrals and other care are still in place. If you encounter issues, document everything and reach out to us for help.

Legal challenges will keep moving forward, and leadership across our allied advocacy groups (TMH, SPARTA, MMAA, and more) are urging us to stay connected, document any mistreatment, and lean on each other for support.

# Taking STOCC (cont.)

## Bottom Line:

Let's be honest. Right now, we're in the thick of it. Lines are broken, and we're fighting hand-to-hand, bayonet to bayonet, tooth and nail. This isn't just paperwork and policy anymore; it's about holding our ground, maintaining our honor, and watching each other's backs.

But we are not alone. We are pushing back, and every single inch they take from us will be paid for. The fight isn't over yet.

Where there is life, there is hope.

Stay alert. Stay together. Keep fighting. This isn't over yet, and as long as we stand together, we will make a difference.

For any and all reporting, send an email to [TMHJ2Submissions@gmail.com](mailto:TMHJ2Submissions@gmail.com)

# Legal Update

Priya (Guest Author)

*A Forgotten Factor is now being used against Transgender and Gender Diverse officers to sway them to leave. Gender Diverse Service Members are being put in a precarious position in Determining whether to pursue voluntary separation or pursue the involuntary proceedings pathway.*

## Background

With the focus generally on characterization of service, the military separation code (SPD code) is often an afterthought in the administrative separation process. Recent DoD Guidance has brought negative coding to the forefront in the legality of the separation of gender diverse service members.

The military separation code, also known as SPD, is a standardized code listed on a service member's DD-214 that indicates the specific reason for their discharge from the military. It is important because it directly affects eligibility for veterans' benefits, reenlistment, and how future employers or agencies interpret the nature of a service member's separation.

Simply, the separation code explains why you were discharged (e.g., medical condition, misconduct, or administrative reason), while the characterization of service describes how well you served, such as Honorable, General (Under Honorable Conditions), or Other Than Honorable. The reenlistment code (RE Code) indicates your future eligibility to enlist. You should work with legal counsel to advocate for a positive and accurate SPD and RE code that is consistent with your honorable service.



## Will I get an automatic separation code?

Under the Department of Defense's 2025 policy, service members, specifically officers separated due to gender dysphoria are assigned the Separation Program Designator (SPD) code **JKD**. However, there are many processes and procedures involving the SPD and RE coding. It is not automatic! Advocacy and asserting your regulatory rights and entitlements are critical in preserving a positive SPD Code.

May 15th DoD Guidance states, "Enlisted Service members will be processed for separation prior to the expiration of the member's term of service under Secretarial Plenary Authority following a determination that doing so is in the best interest of the relevant Military Service, using the JFF separation program designator code. Officers will be processed for separation on the basis that their continued service is not clearly consistent with the interests of national security using the JDK separation program designator code."

This code is recorded on the DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release/ Discharge from Active Duty) to indicate the specific reason for discharge. The policy mandates that service members diagnosed with gender dysphoria, or those with a history or symptoms consistent with the condition, are to be separated from service, either voluntarily by June 6, 2025, for active-duty personnel, or involuntarily thereafter.

The **SPD code JDK** stands generally for "**Security - National Security Grounds**" and is used to indicate that a service member was **involuntarily separated due to concerns affecting national security**. This code is generally reserved for proven and evidenced issues facing national security. Transgender and gender diverse service members should advocate for themselves to receive a more positive code. There is no military, legal, or medical evidence that gender dysphoria as a condition is at all a threat to national security. It is likely this is being used as a pretext to give the government wider leniency in separation of officers.

An accurate and positive separation code is important because it is used to indicate the quality of your military service, and protects your eligibility for future military service, veterans' benefits, and civilian employment. There are actions you can take **BEFORE** and **DURING** the separation process and **AFTER** that can help ensure you receive an accurate and positive separation code.

**Breakdown** - You should advocate for your SPD/ RE code to reflect your honorable service either before separation proceedings or after separation (for example, for those taking the voluntary separation pathway).

## Actions you may take BEFORE/ DURING the administrative separation:

- Consult with Legal Counsel Immediately. You are entitled to legal counsel specialized in your branch of military service.
- Submit a Written Rebuttal with assistance of legal counsel
  - You can contest the basis of separation and provide evidence or argument that the separation code is incorrect or unfair.
  - Include:
    - Statement of positive service, awards, accolades, etc.
    - Letters of support
    - Service records and evaluations
    - Medical or mental health records, letters of stabilization (if applicable)
- Request a Board Hearing (If Eligible)
  - If you're entitled to a board (typically for those with 6+ years, fight for a favorable characterization and reason for separation at the Board depending on the Service.
- Challenge the Narrative Reason for Separation and Request Alternative Coding
  - The SPD code corresponds with the narrative reason for separation. If you can change the reason (e.g., from "national security" to "condition not a disability"), the code must change too.

## Actions you may take AFTER the administrative separation:

You can file a Discharge Review Board (DRB) or Board for Correction of Military Records (BCMR/BCNR) depending on your circumstances. This is a great option if you are pursuing the voluntary separation pathway with shorter timelines. This can be done online or by mail in most cases. It is a case of equity and fairness. In these review boards, you will build a packet showing that the only reason you were given the SPD/ RE code was because of your gender diverse status and that on the basis of fairness and equity it should be upgraded. An attorney can also help with this process.

- Discharge Review Board (DRB) Can change:
  - Character of service
  - Narrative reason and SPD code, and in some cases RE code

There are specific limitations (for example, the Army generally has a 15 year window on filing) and specific forms found on the website of each branch. A military attorney can help you through these forms.

## Conclusion

Transgender and gender diverse service members should advocate for themselves to receive a more positive code. There is no military, legal, or medical evidence that gender dysphoria as a condition is at all a threat to national security. It is likely this is being used as a pretext to give the government wider leniency in separation of officers.

Transgender and gender diverse service members have served in every conflict in American history. If you are a service member facing adverse proceedings due to the 2025 policy changes, please consult with an attorney to explore all of your rights and entitlements that you are due. We appreciate and honor your service to your Nation and look forward to supporting you through this difficult time.

By Priya Rashid, Esq., Legal Director of the Transgender Representation Projection in affiliation with the National Institute of Military Justice

***This is not intended as legal advice. Please consult an attorney, your local Military Legal Assistance Office, or email [trp@nimj.org](mailto:trp@nimj.org) to find a pro bono military attorney.***

# Upcoming Events

- Friday Night Gaming
  - TMH Discord - Every Friday @ 1800 EST
- Pathfinders T4T
  - Veterans Group | Hang-out Night
  - Saturdays at 2100 EST
- TMH Town Hall Schedule
  - 28JUN25 @ 1530 EST (Stonewall Day)
  - 26JUL25 @ 1530 EST
  - 23AUG25 @ 1530 EST
  - 27SEP25 @ 1530 EST
  - 25OCT25 @ 1530 EST
  - 22NOV25 @ 1530 EST
  - 27DEC25 @ 1530 EST
- World Pride (DC)
  - 07-08 JUN
  - Contact Amanda Atchley for details
- HIV Walk
  - 21 JUN, Honolulu, HI
  - TMH will have a table, hosted by Catie and Robin.

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 5th Amendment Rights."
- 3) Say "I want to speak with a lawyer before any further questioning."
- 4) Say "I want to want to end the interrogation now."
- 5) Stop Talking and remove yourself from the situation.

### WARNINGS:

- Ask a military attorney if they are a defense attorney and if your conversation is confidential. If "Yes," you can trust them; if "No," you cannot.
- 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. Know who you can trust: Do Not Make Assumptions About Confidentiality, but seek mental health as needed and rely on your support systems.
- Some military chaplains leak personal information that can be used against service members. See a defense attorney, not a chaplain, for legal issues.
- Statements to friends, family, civilian, and military police can be used against you.
- Computer based systems, texts, chats, workplace emails may be used against you. They are not confidential. Personal use of work computers violates most policies and is a bad practice.
- 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, or any related matter, remember that you have rights under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (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 Not Sign Any Document**
  - Under Article 31 of the UCMJ, you have the right to remain silent or decline to sign any statement if your answers could be used against you in a court-martial or other proceedings.
  - You have the right to consult with a lawyer (Defense Attorney), or civilian counselor any time.
- **You Have the Right to Legal Counsel**
  - You have the right to consult with a military defense attorney or civilian counsel before answering any questions or making any statements.
  - **Waiving your rights** may have significant or adverse consequences.
  - Under Article of the UCMJ, you have the right to remain silent if investigated.
- **You have the Right to not Consent to Search or Seizure**
  - If asked to provide access to personal medical records, electronic devices, or other private information, do not consent without consulting legal counsel.
- **Do Not Make Assumptions About Confidentiality**
  - Conversations with your chain of command, medical professionals, or peers may not be confidential. Exercise caution when discussing sensitive matters.

 This is not an exhaustive list of all of your rights  
<https://modernmilitary.org/report-an-incident/>

# VA Claim Document Requirements

- Service Connection or NEXUS
  - Soldier Treatment Records, ETC
- Medical Diagnosis
- Treatment History
- OPTIONAL/AS NEEDED
  - Personal Statements (FORM 21-4138)
  - Buddy Statements (FORM 21-10210)
  - Priority Processing Request (FORM 20-10207)
    - (This requests a quicker turnaround due to a particular situation)
  - Authorization of Release of Non-VA Medical information (FORM 21-4142)

## VA Claim Basic Steps

1. File an intent to file (FORM 21-0966)
  - a. This intent to file is good for year and the first claim you make will be backdated to this date
2. File the disability claim (FORM 21-526EZ)
  - a. Submit any medical documentation in support of your claims at this time
3. Wait for development letters to come
  - a. These development letters will outline the course of your claim
4. Attend the requested Compensation and Pension exams
  - a. These may be with several different contractors
  - b. ATTEND YOUR EXAMS, THIS IS CRUCIAL
5. The Process can take a long time, be patient your claims will get resolved



Get trans-centered care from a trusted source of community and support.

### Common questions and answers.

Can folks cancel at any time or switch from an uninsured to an insured membership mid-subscription?

- Yes! Membership is month-to-month with no minimum commitment. If someone gets insurance while at Plume, they can switch from self-pay to fee-for-service.

### Code Lifecycle:

- The code will be valid for **6 months** of membership per user from the date of application.

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\$32/mo + copay with insurance (\$99/mo self pay)

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