



September 14, 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our strong support for S.Amdt.869, an amendment filed by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018, H.R. 2810. S.Amdt.869 would prohibit a member of the Armed Forces from being involuntarily separated or prevented from rejoining the military solely because of their gender identity. ACP supports that all Americans should have the prospect to serve their country without fear of discrimination based on their gender identity and we urge your support of the amendment.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 152,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

ACP strongly [opposed](#) the administration's decision to ban transgender individuals from military service. ACP supports inclusive policies that benefit the overall health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals and opposes those that reinforce social stigma, marginalization, or discrimination. We believe that gender identity should be included as part of non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, including those meant to prevent employment discrimination. Transgender individuals are already successfully serving in our armed services and should not be denied the opportunity to continue to do so or to serve in the future. Additionally, as stated in our 2015 policy paper [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health Disparities](#), we believe that transgender health services should be covered by both public and private health plans. **This would include health services provided by the military.** The cost of providing these services is relatively small and should not be used as a reason to deny coverage and access.

When the directive was issued, ACP urged the administration to immediately reverse the decision to bar transgender persons from military service. We also strongly called upon the Congress and the courts to intervene to overturn the order so that transgender persons may serve in the military without discrimination, and are able to obtain necessary and appropriate health services if the administration did not reverse its order. Accordingly, ACP supports S.Amdt.869 so that current transgender military personnel will not be separated from service against their will or be prevented from choosing to continue serving in the Armed Forces. We therefore sincerely hope that you will support S.Amdt.869 to the NDAA and help advance it through the 115th Congress.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Ende", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jack Ende, MD, MACP
President

Cc: Members of the United States Senate