



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on September 3, 2017

## Transgenders in the Military

My 1995 book entitled [Changing Commands: The Betrayal of America's Military](#) devoted an entire chapter to the wrongness of welcoming females into military combat roles. I lost that battle after physical standards were lowered by the Clinton administration and women found openings to hold positions they desired in the several branches of service.



I never thought in 1995 that there would be a similar drive to open the military to “transgender” individuals. Some of the arguments I employed in the attempt to keep Susie and Liz from combat positions apply in the fight to bar those who seek to change what has always been considered unchangeable.

Here’s the most basic consideration I pointed to in 1995: “Wearing of the uniform of this nation shouldn’t be considered a right; it’s a privilege.” Yes, a privilege!

People no more have a right to a job in the military than they have a right to a job in any other profession. If standards exist for hiring steel makers, drivers of 18-wheel trucks, heavy equipment operators, and more, there can and should be standards for serving in the military, not only mental standards but also those in the physical realm.

[The book](#) I penned in 1995 stated: “If the military can properly exclude some persons for not meeting standards for height, age, physical, and mental capabilities, it can and should exclude for such as basic characteristic as gender.” Differences between men and women should never be ignored. But that was prior to the attack on our nation’s culture that saw standards for military service lowered and women welcomed into taking a place alongside men in very demanding posts.

I had the good fortune to develop a friendship with retired Brigadier General Andrew Gatsis. This West Point grad who served 36 years on active duty became one of the U.S. Army’s most decorated combat veterans. Asked about women in combat, he offered sound reasons for his sharp disagreement with the plan. He stated:

I have personally seen [female soldiers](#) unable to lift heavy equipment such as ammunition, mechanic’s tool sets, filled sandbags, food crates, or large camouflage nets. They could not move field range stoves, teletype machines, heavy generators, or even desks. During field exercises, they had great trouble changing heavy truck tires, hitching trailers to the trucks, and carrying people on medical litters. They could not brake, steer, and drive trucks in rough terrain, put up cumbersome antennas, erect large bulky tents, construct ammunition bunkers, dig adequate latrines, or lift material off recovery vehicles.

Politicians and questionable legal experts didn’t listen to the likes of General Gatsis. They went ahead



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and opened up assignments in the military ranks for women that the overwhelming majority can't perform. One can be assured that an enemy's fighters will be men.

Today's issue is the so-called "right" of someone who can't figure out which gender he or she has been awarded at birth. President Trump has told the Pentagon to reject ["transgender" applicants](#), stop paying for sex-change surgery, and develop plans for handling — and likely discharging — the ["transgenders"](#) already in uniform. As expected, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) filed lawsuits to block what Mr. Trump has directed.

HRC points to a 2016 Defense Department study claiming that the annual cost for sex-change operations for military personnel would dwarf the cost for replacing many thousands of transgender individuals already serving in various military posts.

But the issue shouldn't be economic costs. It should be based on the indisputable fact that some are born male with greater physical assets and some are born female who lack the strength and temperament to be successful fighters. And no one should overlook the fact that serving in the military isn't a right; it's a privilege.

Imagine a conflict where an enemy sends a well-trained and physically capable horde against our forces — either here in the U.S. or wherever our troops are stationed. The enemy is made up of strong men who know they are men. If the ACLU, Human Rights Campaign, and culture destroyers have their way, this enemy should have little problem overwhelming a force whose personnel — known to include "transgenders" — can't even figure out which latrine to use.

President Trump is correct. The nation's military is no place for transgender individuals.

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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