

Commission on Equity and Reconciliation in the Uniformed Services Act

The Commission on Equity and Reconciliation in the Uniformed Services Act would create a Congressionally appointed body to identify and investigate the persistent systemic inequalities that face LGBTQ+ servicemembers and veterans of the Uniformed Services.

The bill mandates the commission to provide recommendations to Congress for the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other agencies to remedy past harms and guarantee equity for current and future LGBTQ+ Americans who serve.

Specifically, this bill would direct the Commission to:

- Compile a corpus of information on the policing, both historic and current, of sexual orientation and gender identity in the Uniformed Services;
- Gather written and oral testimonies from LGBTQ+ servicemembers and veterans on the impact of discriminatory policy on their lives and careers;
- Examine the personal, professional, and health-related impacts that discriminatory policy and discharge based on sexual orientation and gender identity had on members of the Uniformed Services;
- Examine disparate impacts that policies targeting non-conforming gender identity and sexuality had on racial minorities and women;
- Examine the impacts that discriminatory policies related to sexual orientation and gender identity have had on the dependents of servicemembers and veterans, and
- Make recommendations on how veterans and servicemembers harmed by these policies may be made whole, how the agencies cited can adopt better, more equitable practices, and how public awareness of the contributions of LGBTQ+ personnel in the Uniformed Services can be raised.

Recommendations from the Commission are to include:

- How the government may offer an apology to those affected by anti-LGBTQ+ policy in the Uniformed Services;
- How current policies which enforce discrimination against servicemembers and veterans based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity can be rolled back or reversed;
- How the DOD may seek to properly compensate severed servicemembers for lost time, access to benefits, professional opportunities, and other harms;
- How healthcare services and other benefits for both active servicemembers and veterans may be expanded to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ patients;
- How discharge upgrades and record amendment may be streamlined through the Boards for Correction of Military Records; and how the process may be made more transparent and accessible; and
- How resources may be committed to diversity training at the DOD and VA.