



**CULTURE**

# Senator Tammy Duckworth on Trump's Trans Military Ban: 'This Man Is Not Fit to Be Commander-in-Chief'

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"We are the greatest military on the face of the earth, and that is not because we are an all-white male military."

BY ASHLEY PARKER

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Newcomer Senator-elect Tammy Duckworth from the state of Illinois poses at the U.S. Capitol November 15, 2016 in Washington, DC. Photo by Olivier Douliery/ABACA Douliery Olivier/Sipa USA USA

On Wednesday, in a series of tweets, President Donald Trump announced an unexpected and controversial new policy banning transgender individuals from serving in the United States military in any capacity. *Glamour* caught up with Democratic Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois—a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel who lost both her legs when the Black Hawk helicopter she was copiloting was shot down during the Iraq War—to find out why she’s so concerned about this new policy.

**GLAMOUR:** What message do you have for trans service members who might be worried about their future with the military?

**SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH:** Just that despite what the President tweeted out, there are many of us here in the legislative branch who understand that their service is not disruptive but in fact enhances the readiness of our military.

**GLAMOUR:** What, if anything, can you and other members of Congress do to support trans service members?

**TD:** This is just part of an ongoing series of work that we have done on everything from women being officially allowed to serve in combat in the military to ending Don’t Ask Don’t Tell to now allowing transgender Americans to openly serve in the military. This is about treating all service members equally and allowing them to be their authentic selves as they serve and defend our Constitution.

**GLAMOUR:** Could there be some sort of legislative response?

**TD:** I think there probably will be some sort of legislative response. There certainly have been legislative actions when it came to women's service. It just boggles the mind that at a time when less than one half of one percent of Americans in the uniform [are transgender], the commander in chief would actually come out and discriminate against a class of servicemen and women, based on information that, based on what he put out, is not even accurate.

**GLAMOUR:** What are bigger current threats to the military, in terms of readiness, budget, and personnel? \_\_

**TD:** That's it, it's readiness.... We're not fully funding the training and programs that maintain military readiness, all the way through to the fact that we've not done good job of taking care of our veterans, which affects whether people choose to serve in the military. Here in halls of the Senate, we should be pushing for a new Authorization for Use of Military Force, something we have failed to do, and yet this is what the White House is focused on. We're trying to destroy ISIS and enemies that would attack us, and this is what the President is focused on.

**GLAMOUR:** You served as an Army lieutenant colonel. What do you understand about a military made up of men and women of different races, creeds, and sexual orientations that maybe the President doesn't understand, having not served in the trenches?

**TD:** That everybody brings value and is vital to the success of the cohesive unit, that if we did not have women serving in the military, we could never have had the female engagement teams that went out in Afghanistan and made such a difference, and were able to gather such valuable information from Afghani women, who were able to help us make breakthroughs. If not for Arab Americans serving in the military, we would not have the linguistic skills to fight ISIS the way we are fighting them. We are the greatest military on the face of the earth, and that is not because we are an all-white male military.

**GLAMOUR:** What do you make of the fact that the President made this

**decision, but today in the daily briefing, the White House was unable to answer basic questions about how they would implement the ban, like how they will handle trans individuals who are already serving in the military?**

**TD:** It shows that this man is not fit to be commander in chief of the United States military. This is yet another policy coming out of this White House that is not even half-baked, at best, and if anything will be destructive to the security of our nation because it seeks to dismantle so many of the strengths of our military, including its inclusiveness. I fell in love with the Army when I was in basic training because it was a meritocracy, because it didn't matter I was a half-Asian woman; it only mattered that I was willing do the job and worked as hard as the man next to me. What [the President] did today was chip away at the greatness of our military.

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