

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Statement on the Opening of Combat Units in the U. S. Armed Forces to Women

January 24, 2013

Today, by moving to open more military positions—including ground combat units—to women, our Armed Forces have taken another historic step toward harnessing the talents and skills of all our citizens. This milestone reflects the courageous and patriotic service of women through more than two centuries of American history and the indispensable role of women in today's military. Many have made the ultimate sacrifice, including more than 150 women who have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan: patriots whose sacrifices show that valor knows no gender.

Earlier today I called Secretary of Defense Panetta to express my strong support for this decision, which will strengthen our military, enhance our readiness, and be another step toward fulfilling our Nation's founding ideals of fairness and equality. I congratulate our military, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for the rigor that they have brought to this process. As Commander in Chief, I am absolutely confident that—as with the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell"—the professionalism of our Armed Forces will ensure a smooth transition and keep our military the very best in the world. Today every American can be proud that our military will grow even stronger with our mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters playing a greater role in protecting this country we love.

Categories: Statements by the President : U.S. Armed Forces, opening of combat units to women.

Names: Panetta, Leon E.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Casualties; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Women servicemembers; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Defense, Department of : Joint Chiefs of Staff; Defense, Department of : Secretary; Iraq : U.S. military forces, casualties.

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