



The Air Force announced a policy Thursday that makes it more difficult to discharge transgender service men and women, offering greater protections against discrimination based on gender identity.

The move comes two months after the Army made a similar policy, inching the nation's military closer to allowing openly transgender troops. Before this new policy, soldiers diagnosed with gender dysphoria, or those who identify as the opposite sex, were discharged from service based on medical grounds with decisions made by doctors and unit commanders. A psychologist or psychiatrist had to approve any recommended discharge over gender dysphoria, and a unit commander had to determine if the condition disrupted the individual's performance.

The new Air Force policy now requires high-level Air Force officials to render those decisions.

"Though the Air Force policy regarding involuntary separation of gender dysphoric airmen has not changed, the elevation of decision authority to the director, Air Force Review Boards Agency, ensures the ability to consistently apply the existing policy," said Daniel Sitterly, a top Air Force official.

[More...](#)