

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2023

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro
Secretary of the Navy
United States Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Del Toro,

We write to express our grave concerns over reports that the United States Navy recruited a drag queen to join the “Digital Ambassador” program to promote Navy recruitment on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) influenced app, TikTok, which was banned from official devices by the U.S. Navy in 2019. Despite facing what a Navy spokesperson describes as, “the most challenging recruiting environment since the start of the all-volunteer force,” the Biden Administration’s Department of the Navy continues to implement radical, reckless, and woke policies that deter capable recruits from volunteering to defend this Nation’s freedoms.¹ As Navy veterans, we understand that a woke military is a weak military.

As you know, according to reports, the U.S. Navy appointed a sailor, who self-identifies as “non-binary,” as the first of five so-called “Digital Ambassadors,” as part of a program that ran from October 2022 to March 2023, meant to expand the Navy’s recruiting horizons. This sailor frequently posts videos on TikTok and Instagram of himself switching from his Navy uniform to his drag queen costumes. Some of these alarming posts include captions such as “Hooyah, and let’s go slay,” as well as him posing half-naked accompanied by hashtags “#navydragqueen” and “#sailor”.²

The inclusion of drag queens in the U.S. Navy’s recruiting efforts comes on the heels of many other disastrous, woke policies that have deterred capable recruits from joining our Armed Forces. Despite an expert panel of military and civilian officials finding that the addition of transgender service members would come with substantial risks to readiness and unit cohesion³, President Biden signed Executive Order 14004⁴, which recklessly reinstated transgender service members –

¹ [Navy Confirms Using Drag Queen Influencer as a ‘Digital Ambassador’ to Attract Recruits](#), Breitbart, March 3, 2023.

² https://www.instagram.com/reel/CiCNuWJjy-o/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link and https://www.instagram.com/p/CcvSr7Kudhr/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

³ [Memorandum for the President](#), Subject: Military Service by Transgender Individuals, February 22, 2018.

⁴ [Executive Order 14004](#), “Enabling All Qualified Americans to Serve Their Country in Uniform,” January 15, 2021.

jeopardizing our national security. Furthermore, the Biden Administration's Department of Defense has embraced the Left's illogical gender ideology by discouraging the use of "gendered" language⁵, requiring soldiers to use the "barracks, bathroom, and shower facilities" of their so-called "gender identity" – regardless of whether they have undergone "gender reassignment surgery,"⁶ and even instructing cadets to not use the terms "mom" and "dad."⁷

Additionally, the Biden Administration is pushing the Left's transgender agenda redefining the term qualified, to enable "all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform," while simultaneously endorsing the now-repealed unconstitutional vaccine mandate that potentially put at least 75,000 troops at risk of discharge.⁸ Furthermore, the Department of Defense Inspector General previously raised serious concerns in regard to the Department's near universal denial of vaccine mandate religious exemption requests.⁹ Thanks to Congressional Republicans, the military vaccine mandate was repealed in last year's National Defense Authorization Act. Yet, despite the proven ineffectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine and even President Biden's assertion last September that the pandemic is "over," the Department of Defense and President Biden continuously defended the medical tyranny of their harmful mandate up until its repeal, putting mission readiness at risk by pushing highly trained and experienced personnel out of the military.

The Navy's inclusion of a drag queen in its "Digital Ambassadors" program is another radical example of the U.S. Navy advancing woke policies to the detriment of our country's national security. The military's current recruiting and retention crisis is dire, as evidenced by Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Lisa Franchetti's April 19, 2023 testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, which claimed that the Navy is projected to be short of its Fiscal Year 2023 goal for enlisted sailors by 8,000 recruits.¹⁰ One thing is clear, the continued embrace of woke ideologies in our Armed Services is unsustainable, and we insist you cease any involvement with drag queens in your future recruiting efforts.

Additionally, to conduct proper oversight into the military's current recruiting problems, as Members of Congress, we request your full and complete responses to the questions asked below no later than June 6, 2023. Please provide an individual response to each question instead of a narrative response.

⁵ [U.S. Forces Ordered to Stop Using Gender Pronouns to Improve 'Lethality'](#), August 31, 2022, The Washington Free Beacon

⁶ [Policy on the Military Service of Transgender Soldiers Training Module, Tier 3: Units and Soldiers](#), September 16, 2016.

⁷ [Air Force Academy diversity training tells cadets to use words that 'include all genders,' drop 'mom and dad,'](#) September 22, 2022, Fox News Digital

⁸ [Coronavirus: DOD Response](#), U.S. Department of Defense. Shows total fully vaccinated service members at 2,000,195, as of December 2022.

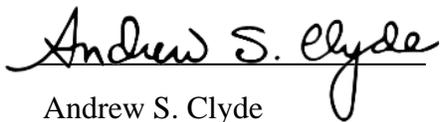
[2021 Demographics Profile of the Military Community](#), U.S. Department of Defense. Shows total military personnel at 2,129,656 in 2021 - for a difference of over 125,000 non fully-vaccinated military personnel.

⁹ [Members of Congress demand answers from Austin over 'blanket denial' of religious vaccine accommodations](#), September 19, 2022, Fox News

¹⁰ [Statement of Admiral Lisa M. Franchetti](#), Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Readiness, PB-24 Joint Readiness Posture Hearing, April 19, 2023.

1. Provide us with all documents and communications between or among employees or agents of the Department of Navy referring or relating to Fiscal Year 2023 recruiting goals, Fiscal Year 2023 final recruitment numbers, the Navy Digital Ambassador Program, and the inclusion of the referenced drag queen as a Navy Digital Ambassador.
2. Provide us an accounting of all taxpayer funds spent in the implementation of the Navy's "Digital Ambassador" Program.
3. Do you attribute the promotion of Executive Order 140004 as contributing to the failure of the U.S. Navy to meet its FY2023 Recruiting Goals? If so, to what extent?
4. What actions are being taken to combat the military's current recruiting problem by ridding the military of the dangerous and divisive ideologies outlined in the letter above?
5. What other actions are being taken to combat the military's current recruiting crisis?
6. With the significant shortfall in military recruiting, do you currently believe the U.S. Navy is operationally ready for the potential geopolitical challenges that lie ahead with respect to China and Taiwan?

Sincerely,



Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress



Eli Crane
Member of Congress



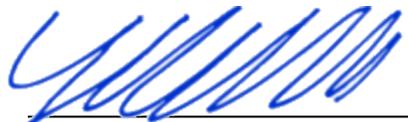
Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress



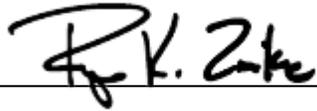
Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



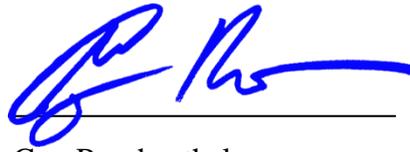
Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress



Mike Garcia
Member of Congress

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Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Guy Reschenthaler in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of C. Scott Franklin in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Ronny Jackson in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Ronny Jackson
Member of Congress