

Proposed Transgender Policy

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To:BOVSecretary <BOVSecretary@vmi.edu>

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Joe Steele, and I am a VMI alumnus (class of 1997). I served as Second Battalion Commander and Honor Court President during my cadetship. After graduating from VMI, I served as an Officer in the United States Marine Corps, including a combat tour in Iraq.

I'm writing to express my grave concern over the transgender policy recommended to the Board of Visitors. Sadly, in these postmodern days in which we live, objective truth is sacrificed on the altar of subjective feelings. Gender should be based on one's biological anatomy at birth, not on one's autonomous sentiments about gender. I foresee catastrophic implications upon barracks life and future cadet recruiting if VMI presses forward with this policy.

If VMI allows a male cadet to identify as a female cadet, on what rational basis could VMI preclude rats from identifying as first-classmen? I challenge the BOV to think through the logical and practical implications of allowing gender to be self-defined rather than objectively defined. It is sheer madness to posit that one can be something or someone they are not simply because they feel they are.

VMI is a distinctive institution that does an excellent job of preparing warfighters and citizen soldiers to serve our country; please refrain from conforming her to the contours of common culture.

I will pray for courage and conviction for the BOV to do the right thing.

In the bonds,

~Joe Steele 97'