

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Applauds House passage of amendment to restore honor to service members discharged due to sexual orientation

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WASHINGTON, DC – Today, U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (WI-02) applauded the House of Representatives for passing an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would correct the military records of service members discharged solely due to their sexual orientation to reflect their honorable service and reinstate the benefits they earned. The amendment is based on [legislation](#) Pocan introduced last month, the Restore Honor to Service Members Act.

“This amendment will require the U.S. Department of Defense to correct the military records of service members discharged solely because of their sexual orientation. Importantly, amending service members’ discharge characterizations to an honorable discharge will enable impacted individuals to access the benefits they earned and to which they would otherwise be entitled,” said Pocan. “Today is a significant moment for the more than 100,000 Americans estimated to have been discharged from the military since World War II due to their sexual orientation. I’m grateful for my colleagues support of this critical amendment and I hope that the Senate will include similar language in its version of the bill and send it to the President’s desk to become law.”

Since World War II, more than 100,000 Americans are estimated to have been

discharged from the military because of their sexual orientation. Those forced out of the military may have left with discharge statuses of “other than honorable,” “general discharge” or “dishonorable,” depending on the circumstances. As a consequence, many of these service members may be disqualified from accessing certain benefits that they earned and are entitled to, and may not be able to claim veteran status. The consequences of a negative discharge also include preventing some veterans from voting or making it more difficult for them to acquire civilian employment.