

(*Hartford*) – Today **Congressman John B. Larson** released the following statement on Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's decision to remove the military ban on women serving in combat:

"Whether in business, politics, academics, or the military, Americans should be given the same opportunities regardless of gender. Women make up more than 14% of the nation's active duty military forces and are just as committed and capable of defending our freedom as men. I am honored to currently serve with women who have sacrificed for their country, including Representative Tulsi Gabbard and Representative Tammy Duckworth.

"Today by removing the ban on women serving in combat, the Pentagon recognized the military excellence of our brave women in uniform and created a clearer path for women to advance in command. I applaud Secretary Panetta for his decision, and know that our military and our nation will be stronger because of it."

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