SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Grooming Standards for Facial Hair

The grooming standard set by the U.S. military is to be clean shaven and neat in presentation for a proper military appearance. When authorizing individual exceptions, commanders must apply consistent criteria and appropriately consider the Department's interests in safety and uniformity.

Effective immediately, I am directing all the Military Departments to implement the following minimum requirements concerning medical exceptions to the grooming standards requiring Service members to be clean shaven:

- Military medical officers will provide a written recommendation concerning a shaving waiver to the commander who is the final approval authority.
- Service members with an approved shaving waiver will participate in a medical treatment plan.
- Unit commanders will initiate separation of Service members who require a shaving waiver after more than 1 year of medical treatment. I have full confidence in our leaders at all levels to provide an accurate assessment of whether retention is appropriate.

As I stated when directing the Rapid Force-Wide Review of Military Standards, the strength of the military is our unity and our shared purpose. The Department must remain vigilant in maintaining the grooming standards which underpin the warrior ethos.

PBHegseth

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