# Biden's attempt to 'mass pardon' gay veterans



In a notable development for the LGBTQ+ community, especially among veterans, President Joe Biden's recent policy has drawn public attention to the process of obtaining pardons for historical convictions related to consensual same-sex conduct. In June, Biden announced a mass pardon for LGBTQ+ veterans who were discharged under Article 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), which prohibited "unnatural carnal copulation" between individuals of the same sex. This article was repealed in 2013, but many veterans continue to deal with the repercussions of these past convictions.

Biden’s pardon is specifically aimed at individuals previously convicted under Article 125, provided that their offenses were rooted in consensual acts between adults, devoid of aggravating circumstances. This significant policy shift comes as more veterans come forward, highlighting the injustices faced during their service.

Detailed reporting from the Seattle Times reveals that the application process for these pardons is comprehensive and requires applicants to submit a myriad of personal and community-related information. Applicants must explain their reasons for seeking a pardon, provide letters of support, detail existing debts, and describe their community involvement and activities.

Despite the clarity of the policy, interest in applying for these pardons appears limited. According to a report from The War Horse, only eight veterans have initiated the application process, with six coming from the Air Force and two from the Army. There have been no applications reported from the Navy, Coast Guard, or Marines.

Steve Marose, a 58-year-old former Air Force second lieutenant, is one of the individuals seeking a pardon. He faced legal repercussions in 1990 while stationed in Louisiana, where he was court-martialled for engaging in sexual activity with other men. Marose shared details of his experience during a November interview with the Seattle Times, describing the invasive interrogation he faced from investigators, which included questions about the specifics of his relationships within the LGBTQ+ community.

“They were going on a witch hunt,” Marose stated, recounting the pressure put upon him by his commander, who warned that failure to cooperate could result in further charges. Ultimately, he was convicted on three counts of sodomy and two counts of unbecoming conduct— one charge stemming from allowing an enlisted airman to stay in his apartment and another related to visiting an off-limits gay bar in Alexandria, Louisiana. Marose was sentenced to 18 months in prison, most of which was served at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

As President Biden’s administration continues to engage with issues surrounding LGBTQ+ rights and recognition, cases like that of Steve Marose shed light on both the personal struggles faced by individuals due to past military policies and the slow progress towards rectifying those injustices through the pardon process.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/president-biden-pardon-veterans-convicted-regulation-lgbt-members/story?id=111418033> - Corroborates President Biden's pardon of veterans convicted under a regulation that allowed people to be kicked out for being gay, and the impact on thousands of veterans.
* <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/biden-pardons-ex-service-members-convicted-under-a-defunct-gay-sex-ban-so-they-can-regain-benefits> - Details the pardon of former service members convicted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice's former Article 125, which criminalized consensual gay sex.
* <https://www.advocate.com/politics/biden-pardons-lgbtq-veterans> - Confirms Biden's pardon for all veterans convicted and discharged due to their sexuality or gender identity.
* <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/president-biden-pardon-veterans-convicted-regulation-lgbt-members/story?id=111418033> - Explains the application process and the need for veterans to apply for a certificate of pardon to change their discharge characterization and access benefits.
* <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/biden-pardons-ex-service-members-convicted-under-a-defunct-gay-sex-ban-so-they-can-regain-benefits> - Provides information on the benefits that veterans can regain after receiving a pardon, such as military pensions, home loans, and college tuition benefits.
* <https://www.advocate.com/politics/biden-pardons-lgbtq-veterans> - Highlights the historical context and the significance of the pardon in righting past injustices against LGBTQ+ service members.
* <https://thewarhorse.org/few-lgbtq-veterans-apply-for-bidens-promised-pardons/> - Reports on the limited number of veterans who have applied for the pardons, with only eight applications received so far.
* <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/biden-pardons-ex-service-members-convicted-under-a-defunct-gay-sex-ban-so-they-can-regain-benefits> - Clarifies that the pardon does not cover nonconsensual acts and that other convictions require a separate clemency process.