

Landon Wilson Discusses LGBTQ+ Advocacy, Policy Change, and Hopes for the Future

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Pride Month is a time for us to reflect on how we can work together as a country to be the advocates in making the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community one of equality. **2017 Tillman Scholar Landon Wilson** is doing just that as he works to be an advocate for students in the LGBTQIA+ community.

In his quest to contribute to something bigger than himself, Landon joined the U.S. Navy in 2011. Serving as a Cryptologist, Landon was able to build a true sense of leadership and pride in the uniform he wore and the service he represented. Supporting

Operation Enduring Freedom, he deployed to Afghanistan in 2013, supervising a team of joint international civilians and service members. Ultimately, Landon was discharged from the United States military for being transgender.

Taking this experience with him, and knowing there were thousands of transgender service members also serving in silence, Landon entered into LGBTQ+ advocacy in 2013, becoming a Board Member for SPARTA, an organization which works to implement policy change and inclusion for transgender and gender non-conforming service members. In 2015, Landon began pursuing his formal education with the goal to teach English to high school students.

For well over a decade, Landon has worked closely with youth who have otherwise been underrepresented in American society, whether it be because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, economic status, or ability. His ultimate passion in life is teaching and learning from youth, in and out of classrooms.

We had the opportunity to catch up with Landon as he shares with us his hopes for the future of our LGBTQIA+ students and the critical role advocates play in creating a more inclusive and equitable educational experience for all.