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### Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Reasons Why to Repeal

Is it fair for courageous Americans to be discharged from the military because they are homosexuals and are open about their sexuality? The answer is no. According to Representative Patrick J. Murphy for Pennsylvania exclaims, in "Gays in the Military" written by Peter Katel for CQ Researcher, "... since, 'don't ask, don't tell' (DADT) took effect in 1993, more than 13,000 honorable men and women...have been discharged from our armed forces" (Murphy). Consequently, this is due to those men and women for their open beliefs and activities about their homosexuality while participating in the military. Rep. Patrick Murphy is a married Irish Catholic father, former captain of the Army, and an Iraq War veteran. Recently, Rep. Murphy is sponsoring a bill to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law so that sexually oriented discrimination does not take place anymore in the U.S. military. As said by Aaron Marcus from the *Washington Times*, "He is spearheading the Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009..." Rep. Murphy is leading an act "that seeks to integrate gays openly in the armed forces", according to Marcus. Homosexual service members should not be discharged for their sexuality because national security is at risk, other alliance countries accept homosexuality in their military, and social views about homosexuality are more open today in comparison to 1993.

The policy that Rep. Murphy is fighting so hard to repeal is commonly known as the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. During the presidential campaign of 1992, Bill Clinton gained

support from the gay and lesbian communities across the nation. For this reason, Clinton promised the gay and lesbian communities that he would lift the ban on homosexuals participating in the military. Amanda Baker, *Washington Times*, in her article "Ex-officers rally to 'don't tell'; Admirals, generals defend policy to Congress" acknowledges the White House press secretary, Robert Gibbs as he informs the nation that, "Mr. Obama believes "the only and best way [to overturn 'don't ask, don't tell'] is through a durable comprehensive legislative process,". Alike, Barack Obama, President of 2009 showed some interest in the unfair policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" just as Clinton has campaigned. Further, in "Gays in the Military", Peter Katel quotes Bill Clinton following his victory as president. "I don't think [sexual] status alone, in the absence of some destructive behavior, should disqualify people..." Precisely, Clinton opened the doorway to a compromise that would be known across the United States as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." This policy enables all homosexuals entering the military to keep their sexual orientation private and they would not be asked upon enlisting, however if those service members that chose not to comply with keeping quiet or behaving non homosexually then measures would be taken to discharge them.

Currently the United States is fighting two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy ultimately affects the security of the U.S. because important militant jobs are not being filled due to the loss of soldiers because of homosexual dismissals. *Washington Times*, Aaron Marcus reports, "According to a study done by the Government Accountability Office in 2005, 757 soldiers discharged held what the army refers to as 'critical occupations;' for example they were voice interpreters, data processing technicians..." Additionally, Rep. Murphy expands on even more jobs that are being affected because of the militant discrimination,

“...fighter pilots, battle field medics and even Arabic and Farsi translators...” Rep. Murphy continues to state, “Former senior military leaders agree that this policy is hurting our national security.” Thus, homosexual service members should not be discharged because it is affecting militant jobs that are critical for the success in the wars.

Not only are homosexuals in the United States but they are around the world. Unlike the United States, they are able to participate in their nation’s military program openly. Rep. Murphy makes the point in “Gays in the Military” that “More than 20 nations, including Great Britain and Israel allow gays and lesbians to openly serve without and detrimental impact on unit cohesion.” Unit Cohesion generally means the bondage among fellow unit soldiers in the military; the relationship can be emotional or circumstantial. This international knowledge shows that even countries that the United States are doing business with daily, can accept homosexuality in the military. Thus leaving many people questioning why the United States has not accepted homosexuality in the military. *Associated Press*, David Crary further supports to explain in his article “In Britain, on the other hand, uniformed gay and lesbian service members marched in the annual Pride London parade...In Israel, the army magazine this year featured two male soldiers on the cover, hugging each other.” With this information, the United States should not discharge service members due to their sexuality because it obviously is not that popular around the world.

Today, views on homosexuality are rapidly growing in acceptance and more and more people are coming out. Due to this, the overall people’s concern is leaning more liberal and less conservative and becoming more aware and educated about homosexuality. This social

increase is not only affecting younger generations but also the older population. In “Gays in the Military” by Peter Katel, Katel captures retired General John M. Shalikashvili, chairperson of the Joint Chiefs Staff in the Clinton Administration what he wrote in the *Washington Post*, “Within the military, the climate has changed dramatically since 1993.” Gen. Shalikashvili continues, “Conversations with service members make clear that, while the military remains a traditional culture, that tradition no longer requires banning open service by gays.” Katel insists further, by explaining, “Last year, 104 retired generals and admirals signed a letter calling for an end to “don’t ask, don’t tell.” Even retired generals and admirals who have experienced war and whom more than likely lived prior to the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy are actually in favor of repealing such a policy. If they can notice the need for change, then the legislature today can easily see it as well.

In this highly controversial issue with “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”, there are many counter arguments that go in favor for the policy “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Amanda Baker, *Washington Times*, confirmed that there was a poll done through *Military Times*, and the outcome was that, “24 percent of active-duty subscribers said they would not re-enlist or consider not re-enlisting if “don’t ask, don’t tell” were repealed.” However, the percentage is close to only one-fourth not nearly enough to fifty percent, therefore even with 24 percent gone if the policy was repealed, the US military will still have over half the total population that they began with. Additionally Aaron Marcus quotes Rep. Murphy in his article for the *Washington Times*, “I stand with three quarters of the American public who believe that this policy should be repealed and is a waste of taxpayers’ dollars,” said Mr. Murphy.” Not only does Rep. Murphy have three quarters of the American public, there to support him but also the idea that it is a

waste of taxpayers' dollars. With this concern, more and more Americans will support the repeal because no one wants to pay and then later figuring out that their money has been a waste. Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center of Military Readiness, expresses another opposing argument and her focus is on other countries situations concerning homosexuals in the military. For CQ Researcher, Donnelly exclaims that:

Service in the Israeli Defense Force is mandatory, but deployments and housing conditions are not comparable to that of America's military. Germany has conscription for both civilian and military duties, but homosexuals serve primarily in civilian capacities. The Dutch, Australian and Canadian forces represent countries with social cultures far more liberal than ours. These forces primarily deploy for support or peacekeeping missions that depend on the nearby presence of U.S. forces. Most homosexuals are discrete, but American gay activists are demanding special status, mandatory "diversity" training and "zero tolerance" of dissent in order to enforce full acceptance.

However, this may be true and other countries cannot not fully live up to the United States' military, but that fact of the matter is that the countries do not discriminate based on sexuality in the military. Referring back to what David Crary made certain was that two other very important allies of the United States, Great Britain and Israel support the culture and lifestyle of homosexuality by utilizing their militaries to participate in parades and media publications displaying homosexuality. Lastly, Donnelly claims in her concluding remarks that "Congress is being asked to impose a risky military social experiment that has not been duplicated anywhere

else in the world. Instead, Congress should focus on national security, putting the needs of our military first.” The repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is not very risky because even homosexuals no how to do the job just as well as heterosexuals do. In addition, the repeal will focus on the nation’s security, because it will fill those “critical occupations” that are not being taken care of because of the dismissals of so many homosexuals who actually know how to do those jobs in the first place.

Overall, homosexuals should not be discriminated in the military because the nation’s security is at stake with the openings of critical jobs; American allies have already accepted homosexuality, thus giving the United States another common ground with such allies if the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” does go in affect. Finally, not only are younger people more in tune with homosexuality, but retired war veterans can be seen pushing the repeal through petitioning. In an editorial section of the Philadelphia Inquirer this past spring it reveals that, “Times have changed, and so have attitudes about gay soldiers and sailors. It is time for the military to be brought up to speed.” Indeed, the times have changed and are going to continue to change as long as there is room for improvement, and even the military can use a little sprucing up a bit. Those in favor of the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” should contact their local state representative and inform them of their position on this unfair and unsafe policy.

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