



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 18, 2011

Gay Servicemen Contest Military's Double Standard

As the 17-year military policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is coming to an end, homosexual military service members are now planning to take on another controversial issue — same sex marriages in the military.

According to Fox News, "In the eyes of the military, [same-sex] marriage will not be recognized," and same-sex married couples "will still be denied most of the benefits the Defense Department gives to heterosexual couples to ease the costs of medical care, travel, housing and other living expenses."

The Pentagon asserts that the authority to not recognize homosexual marriages in the military is derived from the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman.



As a result, homosexual military members will not be eligible for housing allowances, off-base living space. In addition to this, Fox News adds, "If two gay service members are married to each other they may be transferred to two different states or regions of the world. For heterosexual couples, the military tries to avoid that from happening."

Likewise, current policy prohibits same-sex spouses from learning the details of their partner's death, and fails to provide travel allowances for same-sex partners to attend repatriation ceremonies of their spouse if he or she is killed in action.

Furthermore, gay spouses are not permitted to have military ID cards, which means they are unable to travel on bases unless accompanied by a service member, nor can they take advantage of the commissaries or exchanges that include reduced prices for food and clothing. They are also unable to be treated at military medical facilities, and are prohibited from attending recreational activities on base.

Naturally, the policy is likely to be challenged, since it accords different treatment for traditional marriage spouses than it does for partners in same-sex marriages or civil unions allowed by some states.

Army Reserve Captain R. Clarke Cooper, who plans to marry his boyfriend following the repeal of DADT, explains, "It's not going to work. Taking care of our soldiers is necessary to ensure morale and unit cohesion. This creates a glaring stratification in the disbursement of support services and benefits."

Similarly, Major Daryl Desimone remarks, "There are inconsistencies. Anyone who looks at it logically will see there are some things that need to be worked out in the future."

As the Obama administration has already announced that it will no longer defend the Defense of



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Marriage Act in court, however, some contend that the military's current policies have the potential to change.

But with military culture strongly rooted in tradition and being more conservative, generally, than its civilian counterpart, resistance to such change is bound to be rigid.

Photo: Andrew Chapin of New York took part in a rally on Capitol Hill in Washington supporting legislative efforts to repeal the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding gay soldiers.: AP Images



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