



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 28, 2010

House Votes to Repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Military Ban

In what appears to be a race to incorporate policies now that might not pass muster after November elections deplete Democratic majorities, on May 27 both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the full House voted to repeal the 1993 “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law prohibiting homosexuals from serving openly in the U.S. military.



After it appeared inevitable that Congress would ignore President Obama’s plan allowing the Pentagon the rest of the year to study the impact of allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the armed forces, the White House quickly called homosexual activists in to help work out a compromise that would lend the President’s support to the immediate repeal of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” law, while still giving the Pentagon a window of opportunity to work out a plan to implement the change.

Earlier U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates had recommended that Congress hold off on repealing the ban until the Pentagon had completed its study, advising House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) that he “strongly opposed any legislation that seeks to change this policy prior to the completion of this vital assessment process.”

But as public support for President Obama and an activist Congress has waned dramatically over the past year, homosexual activists have pushed to move ahead with their agenda, and legislation overturning the ban was swiftly brokered in the Senate by Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.), and in the House by Representative Patrick Murphy (D-Penn.).

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council (FRC), which has been a vocal opponent of homosexuals serving in the military, said the swift move to repeal the ban amounted to “a tacit admission that after the November election, the Democrats are likely to lose a working liberal majority. They want to get what they can now, and also far enough away from the election that it won’t be prominent in the mind of voters.”

As Democratic lawmakers worked feverishly to ensure the votes needed to overturn the policy, FRC released a study showing that homosexuals currently serving in the military (who are under the constraints of the present policy) are three times more likely to commit sexual assaults than are heterosexuals.

Reviewing all 1,643 reported sexual assaults in the military during fiscal year 2009, the FRC study found that over eight percent were homosexual in nature, with most of them being male on male. With



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the assumption that just under three percent of military personnel is homosexual (a statistic based on surveys of the general U.S. population), the FRC study estimates that homosexuals in the military are some “three times more likely to commit sexual assaults than heterosexuals are, relative to their numbers.”

The FRC’s Peter Sprigg speculated, “If open homosexuality is permitted in the military, these numbers can only increase. The numbers of homosexuals in the military would grow, the threat of discharge for homosexual conduct would be eliminated, and protected class status for homosexuals would make victims hesitant to report assaults and make commanders hesitant to punish them for fear of appearing homophobic.”

In a letter to Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), who has expressed his own opposition to repealing the ban, the chiefs of all four military branches urged Congress to hold off on repealing the ban until after the Pentagon has completed its study of the impact of the repeal. “I believe it is important, a matter of keeping faith with those currently serving in the Armed Forces, that the Secretary of Defense-commissioned review be completed before there is any legislation to repeal the DA/DT law,” wrote General Norton A. Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Similarly, Army Chief of Staff George Casey wrote that he believed “repealing the law before the completion of the review will be seen by the men and women of the Army as a reversal of our commitment to hear their views before moving forward.”

And Admiral Gary Roughead, chief of naval operations, predicted that repealing the ban without completing the Pentagon study will “disrupt the review process itself by leading sailors to question whether their input matters.”

In his own letter to Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, Senator McCain noted that the hasty push to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” amounts to delivery on a political promise that Obama had made during his presidential campaign. “At a time when we are fighting two wars and the force is stressed by ongoing combat operations,” wrote McCain, “we should acknowledge this reality, pause, and think about how a repeal will affect the military and their families.”

Continued the Senator from Arizona, “I cannot over emphasize the importance of completing the comprehensive review prior to taking any legislative action. Our military is currently engaged in two wars and we must have a true assessment of the impact of repealing ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ on the battle effectiveness prior to taking any legislative action.”

Nonetheless, Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, contradicted the counsel of his top military leadership, recently telling military personnel at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs that his “personal opinion” is that it is time to allow homosexuals to serve openly in America’s armed forces. “I believe we need to change it.”

Earlier in the day he had addressed the graduating class of the nearby U.S. Air Force Academy, telling tomorrow’s military leaders that they needed to lend their support to a changing military. While not directly speaking to the issue of overturning the 17-year-old policy, Mullen nevertheless declared, “Few things are more important to an organization than people who have the moral courage to question the direction in which the organization is headed and then the strength of character to support whatever final decisions are made.”

In a letter to congressional leaders before the vote, the Rev. Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission voiced the concerns felt by a majority of Americans over lifting



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the ban. "The military is a place where individuals are often required to be in intimate contact with each other for extended periods of time," wrote Land. "The admission of openly homosexual individuals into the military would engender sexual tension and thereby negatively impact troop morale, unit cohesion, and order.... We are gravely concerned that the repeal of the 1993 law ... will result in the resignation of large numbers of personnel who are currently serving in our all-volunteer services, and that it will be extremely difficult to recruit their replacements."

Cliff Kincaid of Accuracy in Media raised one concern that has gotten little consideration in the debate over "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Noting that male homosexuals are currently prohibited from donating blood because of the risk they may carry deadly diseases like AIDS, he predicted that "their entry into the Armed Forces could mean disease and death for those who come into contact with their blood and bodily fluids on the battlefields of the world."

Kincaid pointed out the ban "would mean that gay soldiers could be put in the position of donating infected blood to other soldiers in desperate need of blood transfusions. So a soldier desperate for life-giving blood could die as a result of the transfusion from a gay soldier." Similarly, he added, "a profusely bleeding gay soldier could threaten those caring for him on the battlefield, ultimately taking the lives of his fellow soldiers."

Kincaid echoed the concern voiced by a majority of thinking Americans, noting that for a variety of reasons the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" will prompt many good soldiers to leave the military "in disgust and dismay, while tens of thousands more will choose never to sign up."

With the repeal as good as done as of this writing, many Americans are now left to imagine a U.S. military increasingly populated by homosexuals free to flaunt their lifestyle during training, in the barracks, and even on the battlefield. While proponents have insisted that lifting the ban would not endanger military discipline, traditionalists are left wondering what, exactly, do a disciplined lifestyle and aberrant sexual behavior have in common?

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