



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 24, 2011

Obama Certifies Repeal of Dont Ask, Dont Tell

“Today, we have taken the final major step toward ending the discriminatory ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ law that undermines our military readiness and violates American principles of fairness and equality,” [said the President](#) late Friday as he signed the certification. The President announced that as of September 20, “service members will no longer be forced to hide who they are in order to serve our country. Our military will no longer be deprived of the talents and skills of patriotic Americans just because they happen to be gay or lesbian.”



Obama expressed his confidence that America’s armed forces personnel “would transition to a new policy in an orderly manner that preserves unit cohesion, recruitment, retention, and military effectiveness.” He added that all Americans “can be proud that our extraordinary troops and their families, like earlier generations that have adapted to other changes, will only grow stronger and remain the best fighting force in the world and a reflection of the values of justice and equality that define us as Americans.”

At a subsequent Pentagon news conference, Major General Steven Hummer, Chief of Staff of the Repeal Implementation Team, focused on the changes that would come with the repeal, emphasizing that “statements about sexual orientation will no longer be a bar to military service. Upon repeal, the services will no longer separate service members under ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell.’ Upon repeal, former service members solely discharged under ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’ may re-apply.”

Clifford Stanley, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, said, “It remains a policy of the Department of Defense that sexual orientations are a personal and private matter, to treat all members with dignity and respect, and to ensure maintenance of good order and discipline.” He warned that there would be “zero tolerance for harassment, violence, or discrimination of any kind.”

At his formal swearing-in ceremony July 22 as President Obama’s Defense Secretary, Leon Panetta declared that “all men and women who serve this nation in uniform — no matter their race, color, creed, religion, or sexual orientation — do so with great dignity, bravery, and dedication.” The Pentagon said in a statement that nearly two million military members have been “successfully” trained to serve alongside homosexuals. “In a written statement, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen said certification did not mark the end of the military’s work on the policy change, adding that training will continue and the policy adjusted where and when needed,” reported VOA News.

Homosexual activist groups applauded the move, with Aubrey Sarvis of the [Army Veteran and Servicemembers Legal Defense Network](#) declaring that “gay” soldiers and sailors “celebrate this historic announcement, and they are ready for this change.” Similarly, Rea Carey of the [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#) cheered the repeal certification, declaring: “Today marks the final critical strike against ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’ a policy whose demise can’t come fast enough. Eighteen years of witch hunts under ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ have cost thousands of exemplary service members their



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careers, once again proving there are very personal and costly consequences of discrimination.”

But conservative-values and military-readiness groups warned that the President’s decision to force through the repeal would not come without consequences. Elaine Donnelly of the [Center for Military Readiness](#) charged that the President’s move was nothing less than a “political payoff to activists of the LGBT Left, delivered at the expense of combat soldiers and Marines whose voices were heard but ignored” in the Pentagon’s impact study of the repeal.

Donnelly noted that as the President’s new Defense Secretary, Panetta was beginning his tenure “by letting down military men, women, and families who were led to believe that their views would be heard and respected.” She predicted that history would “hold accountable President Obama, members of the previous lame-duck Congress, and gay activists who misused the federal courts in order to impose LGBT law and policies that will undermine morale and readiness in the All-Volunteer Force.”

Similarly, Tony Perkins of the [Family Research Council](#) issued a statement noting that “America’s military has barred homosexual conduct in the ranks ever since George Washington’s Continental Army,” and charging that “President Obama, Secretary Panetta, and Admiral Mullen have no basis — other than liberal political correctness — for ‘certifying’ that a reversal of this longstanding policy would do no harm.”

Perkins pointed out that even the Pentagon’s own research “illustrated the dangers of using the military for social engineering.” According to Perkins, fully 24 percent of service members surveyed by the Pentagon said the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell would negatively impact their decision to remain in the military — “a number six times higher than those who said it would have a positive effect,” he said.

The Pentagon’s research also showed that military recruiting would be harmed, with service members saying the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” repeal would negatively impact the likelihood that they would recommend a military career to others. Likewise, unit cohesion would be harmed, with 62 percent of military members predicting a negative impact on troop morale and cohesion.

“The entire process by which the Obama administration has orchestrated repeal of this law was dishonest from the start,” said Perkins. “The recent revelation of a Defense Department Inspector General’s report on unauthorized leaks to the media showed that the conclusions of the Pentagon’s report on repeal had already been written before the troops were even asked their views.”

The [Alliance Defense Fund](#), a conservative legal advocacy group, issued a statement predicting that implementation of the repeal would negatively impact the religious freedoms of Christian and other military personnel who believe that homosexual behavior is morally wrong. “Our troops’ religious liberties are in unprecedented jeopardy because the government has caved in to pressure from small groups of activists to impose homosexual and bisexual behavior on our military,” declared ADF Litigation Staff Counsel Daniel Blomberg. “The first casualty of this disappointing move may well be the religious freedom of chaplains and service members, for whom no formal protections have been adopted despite many having been proposed.”

Blomberg challenged Pentagon officials to release the reports “that supposedly justify this move ... allowing service members, the public, and Congress to evaluate the situation themselves. This administration cannot expect America to accept its ‘certification’ at face value.”

The FRC’s Perkins agreed, urging Congress “to put the brakes on the repeal implementation,” and to “reverse the ill-advised decision of last year’s repudiated Democratic lame duck Congress” that put the dismantling of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” into motion.



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Photo: President Barack Obama



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