



Celebration, Sadness, Concern As “Gay” Military Ban Lifted

The centuries-old ban on homosexuals in the U.S. military officially ended at 12:01 a.m., September 20, with celebration and jubilation in the “gay” community, and sadness among the millions of Americans who opposed the repeal as destructive to their nation’s defense and security.



“At a San Diego bar, current and former troops danced and counted down to midnight,” reported the [Associated Press](#). “‘You are all heroes,’ Sean Sala, a former Navy operations specialist, said. ‘The days of your faces being blacked out on the news — no more.’”

As reported by the [Los Angeles Times](#), when the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) became official, Air Force Staff Sergeant Jonathan Mills logged in to his Facebook page and posted this message for all to read: “I. Am. Gay. That is all.... as you were.” Mills later told the *Times*: “When I woke up this morning I felt extremely relieved and very free. Free to be able to live openly without worrying what I say or do will affect my career.”

President Obama issued a statement declaring that with the lifting of the ban “our armed forces will no longer lose the extraordinary skills and combat experience of so many gay and lesbian service members.” And at a Democratic fundraiser in New York City later in the day, the President said he had met personally with homosexuals who had been thrown out of the military because of their sexual orientation. “As of today, that will never happen again,” he said. “As of today, no one needs to hide who they are to serve the country that they love.”

While common sense kept open homosexuals from the armed services for over 200 years, the DADT ban became official military policy in 1993 as a “compromise between those who wanted to allow open service by homosexuals and those opposed to it,” reported [Baptist Press News](#). “Under DADT, military commanders could not ask service members about their sexuality, although they could conduct an investigation if they learned about a member’s homosexuality.”

Following fast-track hearings in which research demonstrating the negative consequences of repealing DADT was either downplayed or disregarded, Congress voted to trash the ban and President Obama quickly certified the repeal in July, declaring that the nation’s armed forces “would transition to a new policy in an orderly manner that preserves unit cohesion, recruitment, retention, and military effectiveness.”

As reported last July by [The New American](#), among the conservative voices warning of the folly of lifting the ban was that of the [Family Research Council’s](#) (FRC) Tony Perkins, who noted that “America’s military has barred homosexual conduct in the ranks ever since George Washington’s Continental Army.” He charged that “President Obama, Secretary Panetta, and Admiral Mullen have no basis —



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 21, 2011

other than liberal political correctness — for ‘certifying’ that a reversal of this longstanding policy would do no harm.”

As *The New American* reported: “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.”

Nonetheless, according to the Associated Press, Defense Secretary Panetta applauded the repeal and “pledged not to allow other issues of equal opportunity, such as allowing women to serve in combat roles, to be ignored or set aside.” Said Panetta: “I am committed to removing all of the barriers that would prevent Americans from serving their country and from rising to the highest level of responsibility that their talents and capabilities warrant. These are men and women who put their lives on the line in the defense of this country, and that’s what should matter the most.”

Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spun the repeal as an issue of honor among the troops, telling a Pentagon news conference that he believed it was “first and foremost a matter of integrity, that it was fundamentally against everything we stand for as an institution to force people to lie about who they are just to wear a uniform. We are better than that.”

Homosexual activists joined the Pentagon’s top brass in insisting that the move was a positive one for America’s defense posture. Aubrey Sarvis, director of the homosexual activist group [Servicemembers Legal Defense Network](#), called the end of DADT “an historic milestone along the journey to achieving LGBT equality in America’s military. Thanks to veterans, active duty, leaders, allies, and supporters everywhere, this is a monumental day for our service members and our nation. Indeed, we have taken a tremendous leap forward for LGBT equality in the military.”

And Rea Carey, director of the [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#), said the repeal marked the end of “an ugly era in American history. After nearly two decades, lesbian, gay, and bisexual service members will finally be able to serve their country openly and honestly.”

Other Americans, however, grieved the move, with Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention’s [Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission](#) saying it represented a “sad day for our men and women in the armed services and for the country.” Land warned that the policy, “unless it is reversed, will cause significant numbers of our dedicated men and women to leave the service, particularly at the critically important non-commissioned officer level. This action will seriously degrade unit morale and will lead to a myriad of problems. Our armed forces are not the place for social experimentation. They exist to fight and win wars and defend our freedom. Their ability to perform those functions will be lessened by this policy.”

Elaine Donnelly, president of the [Center for Military Readiness](#), noted that “virtually every military expert has admitted that, yes there will be problems with this.... We are headed into some very difficult times in the armed forces. It has nothing to do with weapons, planes, systems, or hardware. It has to do with morale. It has to do with culture of the military.”

Donnelly argued that the change “is being imposed on the armed forces to deliver on President Barack Obama’s political promises to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) activist groups. The high-powered campaign for gays in the military was fueled by sophistry, administration-coordinated deception, faux ‘research’ from LGBT activists, and misuse of the military’s own culture of obedience.”



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One group of personnel that expressed particular concern about the change were Christian military chaplains, who feared the repeal would impact their freedom to point out that, according to Scripture, homosexual behavior is sinful. Baptist Press news reported that in May, “21 denominational chaplain-endorsing officials sent a letter to the Army, Navy, and Air Force chiefs of chaplains, saying they have concern that overturning the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy would ‘create an environment that is increasingly hostile to the many chaplains — and the service members they serve — whose faith groups and personal consciences recognize homosexual behavior as immoral and unsafe, and do not permit same-sex unions.’” Continued the letter, “No American, especially those serving in the armed forces, should be forced to abandon their religious beliefs or be marginalized for holding to those beliefs.”

Ron Crews, director of the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, warned: “We’re doing away with one ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy. But we’re going to have another ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy and it is, ‘If I hold biblical values concerning homosexuality, don’t ask me about them because if you ask me about them, I’m going to have to tell you.’”

The [Washington Times](#) reported that “military leaders warned troops Tuesday not to harass gays who emerge from the closet,” and quoted Defense Secretary Panetta as saying that “we have a zero tolerance with regards to harassment” — or “anti-gay behavior.” Wondered the FRC’s Tony Perkins in a Twitter posting: “The critical question: what constitutes ‘anti-gay behavior’? Is holding/voicing disapproval of homosexual behavior anti-gay?”

On the eve of the repeal, Perkins recalled that the “American military exists for only one purpose — to fight and win wars.” He warned, however, that with the lifting of the ban “the U.S. military becomes a tool in reshaping social attitudes regarding human sexuality. Using the military to advance a liberal social agenda will only do harm to the military’s ability to fulfill its mission.”

He added that members of Congress “are still waiting for answers to their questions about how opening the military to homosexuality will affect issues of religious freedom, conscience exemptions, and same-sex partner benefits. Congress doesn’t even have copies of the rule changes itself.”

Perkins also raised the specter of corruption on the part of the White House in forcing the repeal of DADT, noting that there exists “disturbing evidence that this administration has twisted the arms of a certain high-ranking military officer to get him to change his congressional testimony. The episode — confirmed by the [Daily Beast](#) — is the latest in a string of incidents that have given Republicans sudden fodder for questions about whether the Obama administration is politically interfering in routine government matters that affect donors or fundraisers.”

Concluded Perkins: “Congress should hold hearings to find out whether this happened during the debate over ‘Don’t ask, Don’t Tell.’”

Photo: Navy Lt. Gary Ross, right, and Dan Swezy are interviewed before exchanging wedding vows on Sept. 19, 2011 in Duxbury, Vt.: AP Images



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