

January 2010

The Executive Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th St. NW
Washington D.C. 20071

Dear Editor,

The Post habitually refers to opinions with which it disagrees as “wrong-headed,” as you dismissed the DOD policy prohibiting gays from serving in the armed forces.

Federal law stating the eligibility criteria for military service is set forth in the 1993 Eligibility Law, Title 10, Section 654 of the U.S. Code. It was passed by a large majority, bipartisan Congressional vote after a blue ribbon committee studied the issue of gays serving in the military. The 1993 Eligibility Law did not support the Gay Activist agenda; so, President Clinton had his Secretary of Defense issue the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. The 1993 Eligibility Law is a law. Don't Ask, Don't Tell is not a law; it is a policy issued as a compromise.

The legal framework concerning homosexuality in the armed forces states that nobody has a constitutional right to serve in the military because the military has a special purpose in our society, i.e. to prepare for and prevail in combat for the purpose of national security. This makes it a fundamentally different society from civilian life. Success in combat depends upon military units with high morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion, where unit cohesion is one of the most critical elements in combat capability. Unit cohesion is the bond of trust within a band of brothers that makes the unit's combat effectiveness greater than the sum of the effectiveness of its individual members. The extraordinary responsibilities of the military unit and the unique conditions of service require that the military exist as a special community with its own laws, rules, customs, and traditions, including numerous restrictions on personal behavior that are not acceptable in civilian society. The prohibition against homosexual behavior is a longstanding element of military life that is based on experience with the destructive effects of homosexual behavior in military units. The ban continues to be necessary in the unique circumstances of military service.

Over 1,100 flag and general officers recently signed an open letter to President Obama and Congress stating that repeal of the Eligibility Law is a bad idea. It would not enhance military readiness, and would prompt many to leave military service. This is based on four years of polling by The Military Times that found 58% of service members oppose repeal of the Eligibility Law, 10% would not reenlist if it is repealed, and 14% would consider leaving. At its minimum effect, 228,000 would leave active duty, the reserve, and National Guard. That is more than today's active duty Marine Corps! These losses would adversely affect our officer corps and senior enlisted personnel when we are trying to expand the Army and Marine Corps. These senior military leaders assert that it would

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be crippling to our All Volunteer Force. The number of homosexuals discharged annually is less than the personnel discharged for being overweight; so, The Post's assertion that discharging homosexual personnel harms military readiness is bogus.

The Post sees gays in the military as a civil rights issue. The military sees it as a force effectiveness issue. Admitting gays in the military is a radical departure from longstanding policy. Those who favor this radical change must prove that it won't degrade military effectiveness. Merely asserting that the policy is wrong-headed is in itself wrong-headed.

Very truly yours,

Sam X