

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund calls for end to ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy

Task Force provides testimony at today’s congressional hearing on the policy

July 23, 2008

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund applauds the U.S. House of Representatives for holding the first hearing since 1993 on the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, which prohibits lesbian, gay and bisexual people from serving openly in the military. In addition to submitting [written testimony](#), the Action Fund worked closely with Servicemembers Legal Defense Network and other colleague organizations to prepare witnesses and members of the committee for the hearing.

Statement by Rea Carey, Executive Director National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund

“We urge the repeal of the discriminatory ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy that has resulted in the expulsion of thousands of loyal American women and men from the U.S. Armed Forces. Since 1993, lesbian, gay and bisexual service members have steadfastly pledged to defend our Constitution even while forced into silence about who they are and whom they love. That they are ejected from the military when their sexual orientation is discovered is a disservice to them and their families and a disgrace to our country. This categorical rejection of our country’s brave and trustworthy Americans and the continued squandering of their contributions must end.”

Task Force has long history fighting the military ban

The Task Force has long been a leader in advocating for lesbian, gay and bisexual service members to openly and proudly serve this country in both peace and war.

1977: At the historic March 1977 meeting with the White House Office of Public Liaison, community leaders included discrimination in the military as a top priority for action by the Carter administration.

1988: The Task Force convened the Military Freedom Project to overturn the ban on military service for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people and to campaign for women's right to serve free of sexual harassment. The Task Force exposed instances of women being called “dykes” and “lesbos” for refusing to have sex with men, which propelled the issue before the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACOWITS). DACOWITS recommended that the

Department of Defense expand existing leadership training to include dealing with accusations of homosexuality against women service members and to address these accusations as a form of sexual harassment.

1993: Task Force leaders participated in strategy-setting sessions with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations, non-LGBT allies and Clinton administration political advisors to end the ban on openly lesbian, gay and bisexual service members. This effort, ultimately led by the Campaign for Military Service, resulted in the establishment of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue” policy that has accounted for thousands and thousands of discharges, at the expense of national security interests in a post-9/11 world.

1999: The Task Force Policy Institute released a report that shows that 70 percent of U.S. residents support the right of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people to serve in the military, up from 55 percent in 1992. This figure included 57 percent of self-identified conservatives, 70 percent of moderates and 91 percent of liberals.