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## **Liberal gay activist screening applicants at Defense Dept.**

Carney, Timothy P

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Prior to arriving at the Bush Defense Department, Herbits was a senior counselor at Window Communications, a public relations firm. One of his partners there was leftist David Mixner, also a prominent homosexual activist, who was a close associate of President Clinton and whose liberal activism stretches back decades. Mixner first came to public attention for organizing the 1969 March on Washington in opposition to the Vietnam War. William Waybourn, president of Window Media, which owns the Washington Blade and New York Blade News, was also a partner of Herbits at Window Communications.

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"Mr. Herbits," says the biography, "has worked behind the scenes on important public policy issues including gays in the military, creating an on-going dialogue among gay writers, and in raising funds for numerous gay and lesbian community organizations."

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In the review, Herbits lauds author Randy Shilts' "overwhelming conclusion" that "barriers to open gay and lesbian service in the military will come down."

Herbits, for 20 years an executive at Seagram's, worked in Rumsfeld's first Defense Department in the Nixon years and recruited civilians for the department under Secretary Dick Cheney during the first Bush Administration. A 1989 Washington Post article described Cheney and Herbits as "longtime friend[s]."

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Herbits gave \$400 to the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund in 1994, and, in 1998, he contributed \$1,500 to the campaign of Democrat Margarethe Cammermeyer, who ran against conservative GOP stalwart Jack Metcalf in Washington State. Cammermeyer was discharged from the Army after admitting her homosexuality in 1989.

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Conservative activists reacted with puzzlement and dismay to the news of Herbits' personnel activities at Defense. Elaine Donnelly, who heads the Center for Military Readiness, wondered if Herbits would approve applicants set on enforcing the current law. "It is very disturbing to see someone who is screening applicants at the Defense Department who is probably, based on the biography, a supporter not just of Clinton's regulation but of something beyond that: open homosexuality in the military."

Robert H. Knight, director of the Culture and Family Institute, was more blunt: "You have to ask yourself why the Bush Administration is going out of its way to promote homosexuality, because that's what this is about."

During last fall's campaign, Bush expressed his approval of the Clinton policy. "I support the current 'Don't ask, don't tell' policy crafted by Gen. Colin Powell regarding homosexuals in the military," an October 29 Associated Press report quoted Bush as saying.

Knight said, "If [Bush] puts a homosexual activist in a position of power over appointments, you are guaranteeing a buildup of pressure within the Pentagon to relax the policy against having open homosexuals in the Armed Forces."

For Knight, however, Herbits' employment raises issues beyond that of homosexuals in the military. "This flies in the face of this administration's talk about family values. People are policy, and appointing a homosexual activist into a sensitive position in which job applicants will be screened, are being screened, is antithetical to a pro-family—values position."

Retired Army Lt. Col. Robert Maginnis, who now works at the Family Research Council, tried to assume the best about the hire. "I would hope, that it communicates that they are naive," he said of Rumsfeld and Bush, "but ... that's probably not the case." Still hopeful that neither Bush nor Rumsfeld was trying to make a pro-homosexual statement with this appointment, Maginnis said, "I think that it would appear that it goes back to maybe a good experience that Rumsfeld had with this guy and says, 'Yeah bring him aboard. He's not going to promote his homosexual agenda.' But the guy's got a clear record of doing that."

Sheldon said, "This is no mistake."

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movement-especially the military gay rights movement-is not going to like people who uphold the law, such as myself."

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On Thursday, April 12, conservative leaders met at the Family Research Council and discussed the Herbits appointment along with that of homosexual activist Scott H. Evertz to head the White House Office of National AIDS Policy. "We don't see these as isolated incidents," said FRC spokeswoman Heather Cirimo. "This is a pattern."

Herbits did not take or return calls from HUMAN EVENT's placed to his Defense Department office.

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## Personal attacks cannot tarnish career of Pentagon aide

Stephen E. Herbits does not need a Marine such as myself to come to his defense against the "personal attack" story "Gay Pentagon aide's naming irks right" (Nation, April 13). He has served this nation in a civilian capacity with distinction for more than 30 years.

At age 26, Mr. Herbits was one of the brilliant behind-the-scenes architects of President Nixon's 1969 Gates Commission, which developed a plan to move from conscription to an all-volunteer military. He also happens to be one of the key people who helped Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney assemble one of the most talented Pentagon staffs in 1989 — having served a previous secretary of defense equally well a decade earlier.

From initial results, it is clear Mr. Herbits is bringing his considerable talents to bear in helping Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld with the extremely difficult job of recruiting the caliber of leaders necessary to transform the Pentagon for the 21st century.

I had the privilege of working with Mr. Herbits when I was the staff director of the Senate Armed Services Committee when Sen. Sam Nunn was chairman. On the first occasion, Mr. Herbits worked with the committee as Mr. Cheney was setting up his Pentagon. A highly successful businessman in his own right, Mr. Herbits was

thoughtful and informed in his approach to all matters, producing the desired results in an effective manner.

On the second occasion, the Clinton administration attempted to lift the ban on homosexuals serving in the military. Mr. Nunn, myself and others were strongly opposed to this attempt, and our position was ultimately codified in the law. Mr. Herbits was most helpful to me in helping the committee to understand how to craft a series of hearings to insure all viewpoints were heard and respected without the emotionalism exhibited in your article.

I remain strongly opposed to lifting the ban on homosexuals serving in the military and am not aware of any serious effort either in the administration or in Congress to change that. The writer of the column is painting shadows.

I certainly don't agree with the Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, who says that Mr. Herbits' service is a "slap in the face" to our service personnel.

I have had the great privilege of serving in uniform for more than 32 years, and I look forward to serving for several more. One of the genuine rewards of service is seeing that our military protects the rights and freedoms of patriotic Americans such as Mr. Herbits, who continues to make significant contributions to our national

defense — just like my father did by fighting in World War II.

I am greatly reassured that Mr. Herbits is assisting Mr. Rumsfeld with key personnel, organizational and other decisions. The nation and our military will be better for it.

MAJ. GEN. ARNOLD PUNARO  
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve  
McLean



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BY TIMOTHY P. CARNEY

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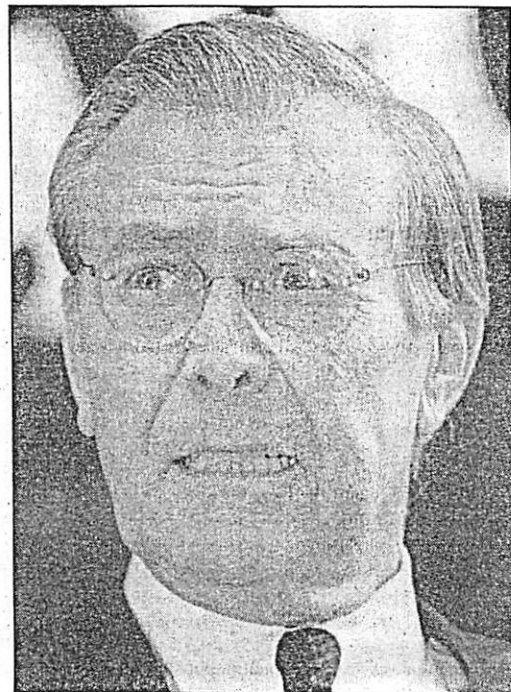
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Donald Rumsfeld

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