

Media 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' about Key Ruling

Court's affirmation of military policy goes unreported even by AP, which instead exhorts Democrats to rescind ban on homosexuality.

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When it comes to reporting on court rulings about the military's ban on homosexuality, the media seem to have their own "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

A case in point was Monday's ruling by the First Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in [Cook vs. Gates](#) upholding the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy, established by Congress and President Clinton in 1993, which enables the military to remove open homosexuals from service.

There was no coverage by the TV networks, nor by the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today* or the *Washington Post*. The Associated Press (AP) ignored the story as well. Only the *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald* carried brief articles on it, because the case originated in Boston.

In contrast, the *New York Times* had a 511-word [piece](#) by Adam Liptak on a Ninth Circuit Court decision reinstating a lesbian Air Force major's lawsuit against the policy. AP had a preview article on May 21 and coverage of the decision on May 22. The latter article, by Gene Johnson, had the usual inclusion of a pro-gay spokesman "hailing" the ruling, and no one defending the military's policy. CNN also ran a brief piece on it.

On Wednesday, Associated Press continued its biased coverage of the issue by running a story by Anne Flaherty titled, "Dems reluctant to take on 'don't ask, don't tell.'"

The article, which was [picked up by ABCNews.com](#), does not mention the federal court ruling two days before, nor the May 22 ruling. Flaherty begins:

"Democrats say the nation should be ashamed of its ban on gays serving openly in the military. It discourages qualified people from joining the ranks at a time when the armed forces are stretched by two wars, they say, and is degrading to those willing to serve their country.

"So what have the Democrats done about it? Nothing, really."

Substitute the word *journalists* for the word *Democrats* and you get a precise picture of where the media are on this issue. Many reporters are past pretending to be objective, and sometimes even descend to taunting fellow liberals for not moving fast enough on their pet issue.

When something happens that they don't like, such as a federal court ruling, they sometimes respond with a news blackout. In this case, they followed up by hectoring public officials.

AP writer Flaherty's story is a classic example of biased journalism. Flaherty quotes Nathaniel Frank, identifying him only as "a senior research fellow at the Michael D. Palm Center in Santa Barbara, Calif., who supports eliminating the ban." She does not share with readers that the Palm Center is a pro-homosexual advocacy group formerly called the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military at UC Santa Barbara.

Flaherty went on to say that Democrats are reluctant to tackle the issue of homosexuals in the military based on the backlash Clinton received from the conservative movement when he changed the actual law to the less stringent "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Clinton's actions were unpopular with more than conservatives, however. According to a *Wall Street Journal* survey, the top issue motivating people to vote Republican (which returned control of Congress to the GOP) in 1994 was Clinton's attempt to lift the military ban on homosexuality.

Flaherty made sure to include that Americans' attitudes towards homosexuals in the military have changed over the past 15 years. She cited two polls conducted in 2007 by CNN/Opinion Research Corporation that "found that a majority of Americans thought gays should be allowed to serve openly in the military," hinting that perhaps there wouldn't be the same kind of backlash now that Clinton experienced if the issue is raised once again in Congress.

She went on to say that Rep. Susan Davis (D-Calif.) and Democrats are hopeful about the future on this issue, particularly if Obama is elected president in November. Davis wants to have a hearing on the issue by the end of the year, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), wants to create a panel of military experts who will investigate the issue.

Flaherty concluded the article with a statement made by Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs, to NBC's *Meet the Press* last year. Powell, who offered several highly quoted arguments that helped achieve passage of the Act in 1993, is quoted only by Flaherty as saying that "gays and lesbians should be allowed to have maximum access to all aspects of society."

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