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Obama: Lift 'don't ask, don't tell'

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Charles City, Ia. – The U.S. military should scrap its “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy that punishes service members who disclose they are gay or lesbian, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said here today.

Obama made the comments in response to an audience question.

“Anybody who is willing to serve our country and die on a battlefield for us and our patriots, that’s the criteria for whether or not they should be able to serve in our military,” Obama said. “England doesn’t have this policy. Israel doesn’t have this policy. It’s an outdated policy.”

Congressional leaders approved the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy almost 15 years ago under then-president Bill Clinton. The policy, at that time, was considered a compromise since it replaced a ban on homosexuals serving in the military.

Human rights groups continue to denounce the measure as an unfair and discriminatory practice.

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