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One Year Later: Commemorating DADT Repeal

By Sunnivie Brydum

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On September 20, 2011, the U.S. military's ban on open service by gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans was officially repealed. While President Barack Obama had

signed legislative repeal of the 1993 policy 10 months earlier, practical application of repeal was pinned to certification by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President.

Several studies have concluded that DADT repeal had no negative impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, retention, or recruiting. By and large, DADT repeal has been hailed as a victory for the brave LGB service members protecting our nation, and as a crowning achievement of the Obama administration when it comes to championing gay rights.

To commemorate the first anniversary of the end of DADT, politicians, advocates, and military personnel have released statements supporting fairness and equality in the Armed Forces.

President Barack Obama: "A year ago today, we upheld the fundamental American values of fairness and equality by finally and formally repealing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' Gay and lesbian Americans now no longer need to hide who they love in order to serve the country they love. It is a testament to the professionalism of our men and women in uniform that this change was implemented in an orderly manner, preserving unit cohesion, recruitment, retention and military effectiveness. As Commander in Chief, I've seen that our national security has been strengthened because we are no longer denied the skills and talents of those patriotic Americans who happen to be gay or lesbian. The ability of service members to be open and honest about their families and the people they love honors the integrity of the individuals who serve, strengthens the institutions they serve, and is one of the many reasons why our military remains the finest in the world."

"We cannot forget — even as we celebrate this day — that there is still work to be done in order to reach full LGBT equality in the military. Even now, families of gay and lesbian service members, veterans, are treated as second-class citizens, unable to receive the same recognition, support, and benefits as the families of their straight, married counterparts. We must repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and all federal laws that prevent the military from providing the same support for all service members and their families. We cannot have two classes of service members."

Patrick Murphy, former U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania, on *The Daily Beast*: "By relegating DADT to the history books, we paid tribute to principles of fairness and justice on which this nation was founded. True, there is much more that must be done to ensure that the rights of all Americans are recognized by our military and by our government. But this historic achievement is paving the way for progress."

"Thanks to President Obama's leadership, marriage equality was included in the Democratic Party platform — the first time this has ever happened. Since DADT was repealed, four states have passed legislation supporting gay marriage.

Donna Red Wing, One Iowa Executive Director: "The repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell marked the end of a long and shameful era in our military's history. The policy known as Don't Ask, Don't Tell denied the very dignity and humanity of our brothers and sisters in

uniform. Our government asked these brave Americans to march into battle and serve their country while simultaneously telling them, 'You are not equal; you must hide who you are in order to serve the country you love.'"

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