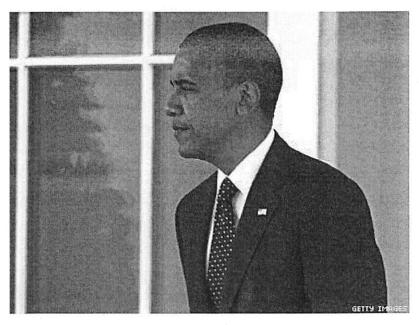
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One Year Later: Commemorating DADT Repeal

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On September 20, 2011, the U.S. military's ban on open service by gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans was officially repealed.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

Aubrey Sarvis, Army veteran and Executive Director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network: "The one-year anniversary of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal is a significant milestone that should not be minimized. We know from our nation's top military leaders, as well as our commanders and service members that the historic transition to open service that culminated with repeal a year ago today has been a successful one. Our men and women in uniform from the highest levels at the Pentagon to our service members on the ground are to be commended for marching out smartly and getting the job done.

"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."

Josh Seefried, co-founder and co-director of OutServe, an organization of actively serving LGBT service members: "What we have seen on the ground is exactly what we expected to see. As service members, everyone always knew there were gay and lesbian Americans serving alongside them. The difference now is that we are able to be honest about who we are, and despite what opponents predicted, that has improved unit cohesion, not harmed it. And now, we don't have to look over our shoulders in fear that we will be discharged from the military we love for simply being gay, lesbian, or bisexual."

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.

"It has fundamentally changed the political landscape as it relates to LGBT rights. Openly gay candidates like Sean Patrick Maloney, who is running for Congress in New York are changing the conversation. Sean and his husband have been together for 20 years and they have three wonderful children. His family is central to his campaign. Not just to promote LGBT equality — which he does — but to connect with average voters concerned about education and the economy.

"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.

"Public opinion has shifted dramatically in our favor. National polls indicate that a majority of Americans support marriage equality — 54 percent, according to a June 2012 CNN poll."

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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- [3] http://joemygod.blogspot.com/2012/09/new-study-no-effect-from-dadt-repeal.html
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