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Gay Pentagon aide's naming irks right

By Joyce Howard Price
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has tapped a homosexual activist who opposes the Pentagon's ban on homosexuals in the military and has supported liberal Democratic candidates to screen applicants for top Defense Department jobs in the Bush administration.

Pro-family groups, already unhappy with President Bush's appointment of a homosexual as national AIDS policy director, are outraged that another homosexual, Stephen E. Herbits, is screening civilians for important Department of Defense (DOD) posts as a "special assistant to the secretary." Mr. Herbits is working on a consultant basis.

"An administration that has pledged to uphold the moral order has no business . . . advancing the homosexual agenda through appointments. People are policy," said Robert H. Knight, director of the Culture and Family Institute, an affiliate of Concerned Women for America.

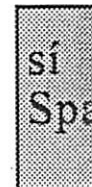
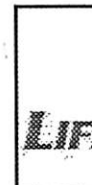
"It appears they [leaders of the Bush administration] are trying to become the bisexual administration. They are trying to have it both ways," Mr. Knight said.

The Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, chairman of the Traditional Values Coalition, also said: "Herbits' appointment sends a message to Congress that the Defense Department openly supports homosexuals in the military, despite the congressional ban. Herbits is an advocate for overturning this ban — despite the intent of Congress and senior military officials to protect the armed forces from homosexual activism. This appointment is a slap in the face to our servicemen and to Congress."

Retired Army Col. Robert Maginnis, vice president for

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national security and foreign policy for the Family Research Council, said the administration has delivered "at least a one-two punch against the conservative community" with its selections of Mr. Herbits, 59, and of Scott Evertz, 38, another homosexual activist, to head the White House AIDS policy office.

Mr. Maginnis said he believes it's "inappropriate" to hire someone who opposes the Pentagon's ban on homosexuals in military service to "vet key people who will run the Pentagon."

While DOD does not prohibit homosexuals from holding civilian positions in the department, Mr. Maginnis says he worries Mr. Herbits may be turned off by qualified candidates who support military readiness but who find "homosexuality incompatible with military service."

Neither Mr. Herbits nor Rear Adm. Craig Quigley, a spokesman for Mr. Rumsfeld, returned phone calls from The Washington Times yesterday.

This is the second time Mr. Herbits has worked for Mr. Rumsfeld. The first time was 25 years ago, during Mr. Rumsfeld's first tenure as defense secretary.

Mr. Herbits also recruited civilians for DOD under former Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney — now the vice president — during the administration of former President George Bush.

Asked yesterday if Mr. Cheney knew Mr. Herbits was a homosexual when he hired him at DOD in early 1989, Juleanna Glover Weiss, a spokeswoman for the vice president said, "Sexual orientation would not have been a consideration and would not have been discussed."

David Elliot, spokesman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said of Mr. Rumsfeld's rehiring of Mr. Herbits at DOD: "Secretary Rumsfeld recognizes that sexual orientation is irrelevant for employment in the Defense Department. We look forward to the repeal of 'don't ask, don't tell,' " referring to the military's official policy on homosexuals in the armed forces.

Given that Mr. Herbits is now serving in the Bush administration, both Mr. Maginnis and Mr. Knight said they were shocked to read in Human Events, the national conservative weekly, that the new Defense Department consultant contributed \$13,000 to the Democratic National Committee and \$3,750 to Democratic candidates for House and Senate seats in the 2000 election cycle. But the article said a check of Federal Election Commission records showed he gave no reportable contributions to Republican candidates in 2000.

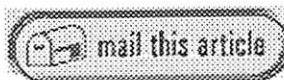
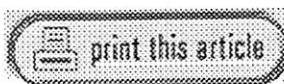
Mr. Maginnis said he was appalled to learn that Mr. Herbits donated \$1,500 in 1998 to the Democratic congressional campaign of Margaret Cammermeyer, who was discharged from the Army after announcing she was a lesbian nine years

earlier.

However, Mr. Herbits also has given donations to some Republican candidates, including former President George Bush, former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, and former New York Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, according to Human Events.

Mr. Maginnis said he thinks it was "naive" of the Bush administration to think that conservatives "who pushed [George W.] Bush over the top" in the close 2000 election "would overlook" the selections of homosexual activists to high-level positions addressing issues such as AIDS and defense.

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