



Center for Military Readiness

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President

News Conference – Military Culture Coalition

The LGBT Law for the Military: How Does This Improve Military Readiness?

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Statement of Elaine Donnelly, President, Center for Military Readiness

President Barack Obama has ordered Pentagon leaders to promote his gays-in-the-military cause. On February 2, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee, “*We have received our orders from the commander in chief and are moving out accordingly.*”

Secretary Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said nothing about possible *benefits* for the military. Instead, Secretary Gates promised to “*minimize disruption and polarization,*” and to “*mitigate*” negative consequences for “*unit cohesion, recruiting [and] retention.*” Adm. Mullen admitted he did not know what repeal would mean, but spoke (for himself only) in favor of policies known to be disruptive. Adm. Mullen called this “*leadership,*” but it looked like letting down the troops to me.

McClatchy News reported yesterday that Adm. Mullen aggressively solicited comments about his stand on this issue while speaking with a group of two dozen troops in Amman, Jordan. It is not surprising that none of the troops put their career at risk by taking issue with the military’s top officer in the presence of the media. It *is* surprising that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would try to use subordinate troops as props in support of his personal opinions.

Activists and allies in the media keep suggesting that repeal of current law will not cause any complications in military life. The attached set of charts, highlighting how the new LGBT Law would work in actual practice, indicate otherwise. Most of the small graphic boxes and points highlighted on the flow charts represent complicated problems that will be loaded on the backs of countless mid-level officers and NCOs. They should not have to pay the bill for political promises that President Barack Obama made to the LGBT Left.

By definition, a Defense Department task force producing a pre-determined paper on

“how” and not “if” Congress should repeal the 1993 Eligibility Law (Section 654, Title 10, U.S.C.) will not be an objective “study.” And a 45-day search for excuses to suspend enforcement of the 1993 law suggests that the Executive Branch can pick and choose which laws to enforce and which laws to ignore. This is worse than pointless—it is irresponsible.

We are counting on members of Congress to join with House Armed Services Committee Ranking member Howard P. “Buck” McKeon in asking questions about the proposed LGBT Law. Responsible members on both sides of the aisle should join Senate Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Sen. John McCain in reminding Pentagon officials that the American people have a Congress for good reasons. On issue after issue, the most fundamental question about the proposed LGBT Law is this: *“How Does This Improve Military Readiness?”* If the LGBT Law does not benefit the All-Volunteer Force—the only military we have—it should not be passed.

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Elaine Donnelly is President of the Center for Military Readiness, an independent public policy organization that specializes in military/social issues. More information is available on the CMR website, www.cmrlink.org.