



Center for Military Readiness 

Promoting high standards and sound priorities for our military men and women.

For Immediate Release

February 11, 2013

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Obama Betrays Military Families on Eve of State of the Union Address

*In response to news that outgoing Secretary of Defense **Leon Panetta** has signed a memorandum titled ["Extending Benefits to Same-Sex Domestic Partners of Military Members."](#) **Elaine Donnelly**, President of the **Center for Military Readiness**, issued the following statement:*

"This problematic announcement appears to be yet another political payoff to President Obama's **LGBT** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) supporters on the eve of his **State of the Union Address**. By equating same-sex domestic partnerships with natural marriage, the lame-duck Secretary of Defense has created a new inequity. Unmarried same-sex couples signing Secretary Panetta's on-paper-only "**Declaration of Domestic Partnership**" will have special rights, status, and benefits that are denied to opposite-sex domestic partners and their dependents.

"Eventual correction of this inequity in the name of 'consistency,' and eventual extension of medical, housing and other costly benefits on an incremental basis, will rob even more funds from limited defense budget accounts that are devoted to traditional family support.

"Even the Pentagon's own **Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG)** advised against such a policy in 2010, and the case against such a change is even stronger now in view of pending budget cuts that could hollow-out the All-Volunteer Force. (See pp. 145-146, CRWG Report)

"Once again, members of Congress are being cut out of the picture by the lame-duck Secretary of Defense, who will not have to cope with the consequences. Far from conducting a 'careful review,' administration officials have disregarded their own previous commitments regarding marriage that they made to Congress in 2010.

"As CMR warned at the time, Congress should not have believed promises that family benefits would not be extended to same-sex couples, due to the **Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)**. A 'marriage-like' ceremony took place last year in a dedicated chapel at **Fort Polk, Louisiana**, a state that defines marriage solely as the union of one man and one

woman. In addition, administration lawyers are in court supporting litigation to repeal the DOMA.

"At a time when defense budgets are being slashed, it makes no sense for the Commander-in-Chief to expand the number of unmarried couples and dependents claiming equal status now and costly benefits later. Expenditures of potentially enormous size will come at the expense of traditional military families, and divert even more funds from operational missions into the social experiment that America's military has become.

"Secretary Panetta's memo claims that successful repeal of the law usually called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" justifies the new policy on same-sex marriage status and benefits. On the contrary, predicted consequences **LGBT Law** in the military continue to show up even though servicemembers have no way to report problems as a consequence of LGBT law in the military. According to the [Report of the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office \(SAPRO\) for 2011](#), sexual assaults on men have increased significantly, from **10% in FY 2010** to **14% in restricted reports**, and **12% in unrestricted reports**. (See p. 60, Exhibit 26, and p. 53, Exhibit 15)

"Congress should hold Pentagon officials accountable for their failure to provide legally-required implementing regulations. Confirmation of Department of Defense appointees also should be put on hold pending production of the required information."

To schedule an interview on this subject, call CMR Executive Director **Tommy Sears** at **202/347-5333**, or President **Elaine Donnelly** at **734/464-9430**.

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