

History of don't ask, don't tell policies in the us military forces



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The United States military has never been afraid to voice its opinion when it has come to talks about disallowing LGBT personnel to openly serve in the military. The history of military relationship with the LGBT community has drastically changed from a simple policy of exclusion to implementing the code of conduct and “ Don’t ask Don’t tell,” to now finally repelling the Don’t ask don’t tell policy and now today its policies on LGBT serving has become more accepting.

The American military has been the first to overcome, many prejudices dealing with cultural, religious, and racial groups even when the private sector has refused and continued prejudice towards such groups. Military integration of these groups have often proceeded faster than that of the private business. The military ended the segregation of African American soldiers in the armed forces after World War II, even more recently allowing women to serve in more combat roles. Supporters of The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community were looking to the military to lift the ban on the LGBT personnel serving in the military. So that they could serve openly in the armed forces.

The Department of Defense’s attempt at other a very week “ Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, was said to be in opposition to the very civil rights they are charged to defend. Because our Military personnel are charged with protecting the civil rights of all people regardless of race, gender, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected categories. The LGBT soldiers, airmen, marine or seaman, like any serving along beside them, deserve to be honored and respected for their decision to this serve in any branch of the Military. The Us Military has a history of discriminating

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against groups, African Americans, and Asian Americans who have served in the armed forces since the 1800s but were segregated until 1948.

The military has had a ban on the LGBT community from the beginning of the Armed Forces. On March 10, 1778, Lieutenant Frederick Gotthold Enslin became the first American soldier to be kicked out of the military for being gay. General Washington approved the dishonorable discharge of Lieutenant Enslin who had been found guilty of sodomy and perjury. (Baume, 2019) Even though there has always been a ban it has not stopped the LGBT from joining and fighting in the military. During World War II the military was desperate to meet enlistment quotas, they admitted gay people with the understanding that they would be discreet and not talk about their sexuality. For many gay men and lesbians, Berube wrote, military service was actually a godsend: It took them away from small-town life and gave them their first opportunity to meet other gay people. (Berube, 1991)

The “ Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was a result of a compromise between the then Clinton Administration and the congressional leadership of the time.

The Clinton Administration wanted to end the ban on lesbians and gays from joining the military but compromised on the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy that allowed gays and lesbians to serve in the military as long as they did not speak openly about their sexuality or activities. Although the policy made a change from the outright ban in that just by being gay, bisexual or lesbian was no longer a disqualifying situation for military service. LGBT supporters were still not happy with the simple don’t talk about it approach, because the new policy still allowed for the military to discharge those that were

found out and the discharge was usually under less than honorable conditions, which could have a severe impact on civilian life.

A survey given to service members in 2010 revealed that 69 percent had served with someone that they thought or knew to be gay, bi-sexual, or lesbian, 92 percent of those said that they did not believe it hurt the moral or working environment of their units. (Towle, 2010) An 85-year-old WWII Veteran said that he had served during the Normandy Invasion, there were at least five men in his unit that everyone knew to be gay, and as the stormed the beach that day the German Bullets did not discriminate, and that they all took care and covered each other during the rain of bullets (Meyer). In June of 2015 Army General Randy Taylor introduced his spouse at an event with a lot of top people from the military. What made this introduction so different was he had introduced his husband, Lucas. In his introduction he stated that they had bet everything on his long military career, until the repeal of the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy. The event itself was notable because it was the Pentagon's 4th gay pride celebration, in attendance was the Army's office of energy initiative director who happens to be transgender and lesbian chaplain. (Scarborough, 2015)

There are around 25 countries within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that are confirmed to allow openly gay or lesbians serve in the military, that number goes up if you count countries that have no policies at all on banning gay or lesbians. Some countries have even designed programs to provide needed support for LGBT service members. There are at least 18 countries that currently allow transgender personnel to serve in the

armed forces, some of these countries are France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Thailand, and Spain. (Pasulka, 2014) The Canadian, and Australian military ended their Ban on LGBT from serving in the military in 1992. How about ability and fitness to serve, A transgender persons Identifying as a male would have to meet all the requirements set forth for a male service member of the same age: anyone that identifies as female must meet female standards. Transgender personnel who can meet the standards are fit for service. Transgender personnel are medically and physically fit to serve; they meet standards and serve today. One key issue for transgender service members relating to fitness for service is the transition period. The transition can take between 12 to 18 months, roughly the same time it takes to recover fully from rotator cuff surgery. Within that time frame, there are periods of time in which the service member will not be fit for full duty if surgery is required but working with command staff when scheduling these procedures can minimize disruption to the unit and deployments (Caputo, 2017).

Depending on the area that you live some court systems and federal agencies have been able to give some protection to LGBT Americans, under current statutes and laws. As of now, there is not a federal law that protects from discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identification. LGBT rights advocates have been pushing to pass such laws for decades, starting long before their successful fights to legalize same-sex marriage and allow gay people to serve openly in the military. And in March, lawmakers from both chambers of Congress launched yet another attempt, introducing the Equality Act of 2019. The Equality Act of 2019 would ensure

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that receiving equal treatment does not depend on living in the right state or community. It would update a series of major existing federal laws — including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act to defend the liberties of LGBTQ people and expand protections for all Americans. The bill will also prohibit the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 from providing a claim, defense, or basis for challenging such protections.

The Military was responsive to providing benefits to same sex marriages , providing equal benefits since 2013, However the department of Veteran administration could not provide benefits to same sex marriages unless they resided in the few states that recognized same sex marriage at the time. Now that the Supreme court has declared that section 3, of the defense of marriage act unconstitutional, Section 3 Of the Defense of Marriage act defines spouse and marriage for the use of federal laws. Providing that same sex service member or DOD employee had a valid marriage certificate they where provided the same benefits as other members in June of 2015 the supreme court required all states to recognize same sex marriage, with this the Veterans administration could now offer benefits to the spouse of Veterans with same sex marriages. Some of theses benefits include medical coverage , survivor benefits, and to be counted as a dependent on service connected claims.


It is time for the Military leadership and congressional members to recognize that LGBT equality in the military, and face the reality that LGBT Americans serve in uniform and make sacrifices on our behalf, just like Non-LGBT service members. It is the rightful duty of the current presidential <https://assignbuster.com/history-of-dont-ask-dont-tell-policies-in-the-us-military-forces/>

administration and members of all elected political groups to support our military and to ensure that the men and women , regardless of sexual orientation can continue to perform to the best of their abilities. It is time that all military branches accept new policies, training and understanding, when it comes to caring for our troops and achieving LGBT equality in the military.

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