

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2011

Statement by the President on the Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell

Today, the discriminatory law known as 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is finally and formally repealed. As of today, patriotic Americans in uniform will no longer have to lie about who they are in order to serve the country they love. As of today, our armed forces will no longer lose the extraordinary skills and combat experience of so many gay and lesbian service members. And today, as Commander in Chief, I want those who were discharged under this law to know that your country deeply values your service.

I was proud to sign the Repeal Act into law last December because I knew that it would enhance our national security, increase our military readiness, and bring us closer to the principles of equality and fairness that define us as Americans. Today's achievement is a tribute to all the patriots who fought and marched for change; to Members of Congress, from both parties, who voted for repeal; to our civilian and military leaders who ensured a smooth transition; and to the professionalism of our men and women in uniform who showed that they were ready to move forward together, as one team, to meet the missions we ask of them.

For more than two centuries, we have worked to extend America's promise to all our citizens. Our armed forces have been both a mirror and a catalyst of that progress, and our troops, including gays and lesbians, have given their lives to defend the freedoms and liberties that we cherish as Americans. Today, every American can be proud that we have taken another great step toward keeping our military the finest in the world and toward fulfilling our nation's founding ideals.

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