

Murphy Votes to Repeal of Military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Policy and Encourages President Obama to Stand Firm on Pledge to End Practice

Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) reaffirmed his support for repealing the Department of Defense's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding homosexuals serving in the military. For the past seventeen years, federal law has prohibited gay men and women openly serving in the military simply because of their sexual orientation.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) reaffirmed his support for repealing the Department of Defense's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding homosexuals serving in the military. For the past seventeen years, federal law has prohibited gay men and women openly serving in the military simply because of their sexual orientation.

"I'm willing to vote on this repeal as many times as it takes to erase one of America's last vestiges of state-endorsed discrimination. Our men and women in uniform are looking for some leadership from this Congress to do the right thing. I hope that we will have the courage to stand up for gays and lesbians in the military and send this President Obama's desk before we adjourn," said Murphy.

The repeal of this policy has gained support from Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and men and women serving on the ground. Last month, the Department of Defense released their long-awaited report on the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and it showed that an overwhelming majority of service members support repealing it. Yet last week, the United States Senate failed, for a second time, to pass a bill to

end it, and so Murphy sent a letter to President Obama to encourage him to hold firm and continue his efforts to overturn the policy.

Murphy wrote: "Now is not the time to withdraw from the fight to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' All of history's campaigns for equal protection hit roadblocks now and again - we must not allow this setback to weaken our resolve."

The effects of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" on our Armed Services have been overwhelmingly negative. The discriminatory policy not only hurts our national security, but also costs our military valuable resources in personnel and funds. An average of two service members is discharged from the military every day, simply due to their sexual orientation. Since 1994, over 13,000 service members - the equivalent of 3 ½ combat brigades- have been discharged as a result of this policy. And in the last five years, while our country has been engaged in two wars, the military has discharged over 800 mission-critical troops under of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," including over 50 Arabic linguists.

"We are only hurting our own national security and our military's ability to complete their mission by discharging highly-qualified men and women from the military simply because of their sexual orientation. Our men and women in uniform are ready to move on from this policy, it's time for Congress to listen to them and act to end discrimination," said Murphy.

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