



March 31, 2011

The Honorable Mike Huckabee
Post Office Box 2008
Little Rock, AR 72203

Dear Governor Huckabee,

I was disappointed to read the reports that you have called on Congress to repeal the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the law that prohibits gay and lesbian members of the U.S. armed forces from serving without having to lie about who they are.

You say that you want "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" reinstated "because that's really what the military wants." I'm not sure how you came to this conclusion about what the military wants. It is certainly not based upon what the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs said he wanted, or what most of the service chiefs said they wanted. The Department of Defense conducted a survey of the force — the largest, most comprehensive survey ever conducted of the U.S. military — and that isn't what that survey showed either. In fact, the survey found that when a service member had worked with either a gay or lesbian colleague, 92% rated the unit's ability to work together as very good, good, or neutral, including 89% in Army combat units and 84% in Marine combat units. If you're interested in finding out "what the military wants," I commend the survey report to you.

Perhaps because you were not in Congress during the past few years, you did not follow the debate about whether to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell". You did not hear Naval Academy graduate and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen testify that repealing DADT is "the right thing to do" and explain, "I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens." And perhaps you did not review the report prepared by the Pentagon working group after its exhaustive nine-month study, a report which found no barriers to repeal.

This isn't — and has never been — a partisan political issue. Many Republicans in the Senate and House voted for repeal last year. Without them, that legislation would not have been enacted. Almost twenty years ago, a distinguished Republican and expert on military affairs wrote

"After more than 50 years in the military and politics, I am still amazed to see how upset people can get over nothing. Lifting the ban on gays in the military isn't exactly nothing, but it's pretty damned close."

Barry Goldwater was right then, and his words still make sense today.

I hope that you can review the record that was before Congress last year when it was considering this legislation. I'm confident that if you do, you will agree that Congress did the right thing when it voted overwhelmingly to scrap this militarily harmful and discriminatory policy.

Very truly yours,

Aubrey Sarvis
Army Veteran and SLDN Executive Director