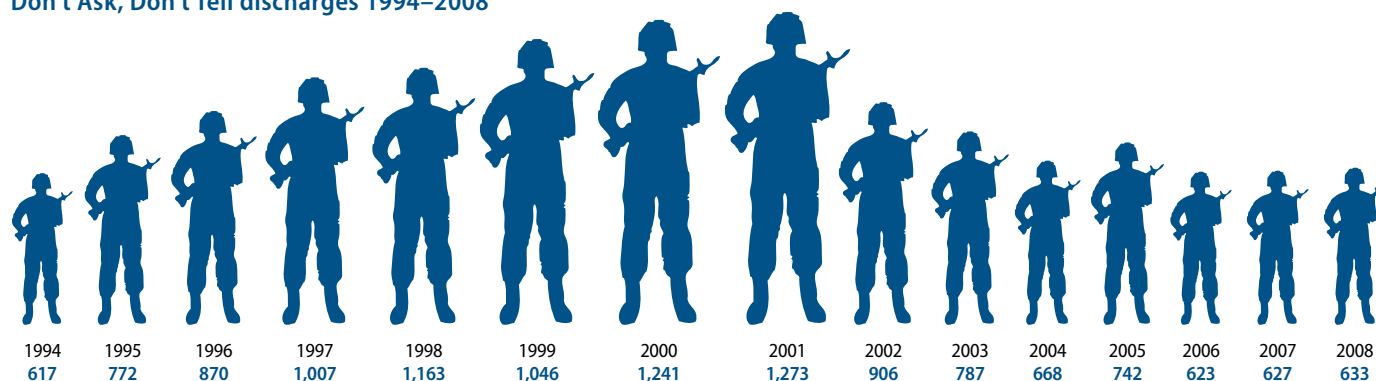




Don't Ask, Don't Tell By the Numbers

- Nearly 14,000 gay and lesbian service men and women have been discharged from military service since 1993.
- More than 33,000 gay and lesbian service men and women have been discharged from military service since 1980.
- A survey of 545 service members who served in Afghanistan and Iraq found that 73 percent are comfortable in the presence of gay men and lesbians. Of the approximately 20 percent who said that they were uncomfortable, only 5 percent are “very uncomfortable,” while 15 percent are “somewhat uncomfortable.”

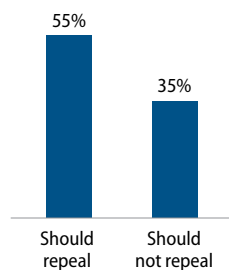
Don't Ask, Don't Tell discharges 1994–2008



- This policy may have cost the U.S. government more than \$1.3 billion since 1980.
- According to research at the University of California, Santa Barbara, “No reputable or peer-reviewed study has ever shown that allowing service by openly gay personnel will compromise military effectiveness.”
- The GAO found in 2005 that discharging and replacing each service member cost the federal government approximately \$10,000.
- Researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara found that the GAO’s methodology did not include several important factors and that the actual number was closer to \$37,000 per service member.
- Twenty-four countries allow gay men and lesbians to serve openly in the military. None of these have reported “any detriment to cohesion, readiness, recruiting, morale, retention or any other measure of effectiveness or quality,” according to the Palm Center, and “in the more than three decades since an overseas force first allowed gay men and lesbians to serve openly, no study has ever documented any detriment to cohesion, readiness, recruiting, morale, retention or any other measure of effectiveness or quality in foreign armed services.”
- Even the British, whose military structure and deployment patterns are most similar to ours—and who fiercely resisted allowing gays to serve in the military—were forced to do so by the European Court of Human Rights, and have now seamlessly integrated them.
- During the First Persian Gulf War, enforcement of the ban on gays in the U.S. military was “suspended without problems.” Moreover, “there were no reports of angry departures.”
- The CIA, State Department, FBI, and Secret Service all allow gay men and women to serve openly without any hamper on effectiveness or quality.

Stable majority for change

Federal law currently prohibits openly gay men and women from serving in the military. Do you think this law should be repealed or not?



Source: Data from a Democracy Corps survey of 847 likely '10 voters conducted November 12–16, 2009. MoE±3.4.

For citations, please see our report “Ending ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’” at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/dont_ask_dont_tell.html.