



SWANALERT -

Don't Ask Don't Tell

Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT), the unfair and discriminatory policy that has been in place for 17 years and affected tens of thousands of servicemembers, is now at the cusp of being repealed. Senate leadership has called for a vote on the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act, which includes an amendment that would repeal DADT.

SWAN has been working closely with other veterans organizations, legislators and civil rights organizations to overturn this policy. Meanwhile, DADT discharges continue unabated, and continue to disproportionately impact women and people of color.

SWAN continues to press for immediate repeal of DADT, but is also looking ahead to a post-repeal military. LGBT servicemembers are already targets of sexual harassment and sexual assault [also known as Military Sexual Trauma (MST)]. In a newly-integrated military, MST perpetrated against LGBT servicemembers has the potential to increase without proper institutional protections in place.

Our policy team is taking this urgent message to MST advocates, repeal groups, legislators and other veterans organizations. With their help, SWAN is asking the Department of Defense (DoD) to review and revise its Equal Opportunity policy in order to provide a larger umbrella of protection against sexual harassment for all servicemembers regardless of sexual orientation. SWAN is also working on new sexual assault legislation which would require the DOD to provide both gay and straight servicemembers with effective prevention measures, require commanders to consistently prosecute offenders, and provide concrete remedies and protections for survivors of MST.

SWAN is taking a lead on many more initiatives that will transform military culture and make it a safer place to serve. We believe wholeheartedly that when someone signs up to serve their country, they are not signing away their right to bodily integrity. We urge you to become a

partner in our efforts by clicking on the DONATE NOW button at the bottom of the page and making a tax-deductible contribution to this groundbreaking and lifesaving work.

New Palm Center Report: Don't Ask Don't Tell Still Disproportionately Affects Women

Women currently make up only 14 percent of the military; however, women made up 39 percent of the total Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT) discharges in 2009, according to a new report from [The Palm Center](#). Since its inception in 1993, DADT has been selectively enforced and it is clear that in practice, this policy discriminates against women and people of color.

SWAN is preparing a revised version of our LGBT fact sheet that reflects this new data. Stay tuned for this information to be distributed soon.

Log Cabin Republicans V. United States of America



On September 9, 2010, a Federal judge ruled that the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy is unconstitutional on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment and due process rights of gay and lesbian service members. This ruling came as a result of a case filed in 2004 by the Log Cabin Republicans, which featured testimony from Jenny Kopfstein, a decorated Navy officer discharged under DADT in 2002.

SWAN applauds the federal court's groundbreaking decision and honors the courageous veterans who testified in the case.

DADT Rand Survey

SWAN has been working closely with RAND Corporation this year to increase the participation of active-duty women in their Don't Ask, Don't Tell survey. Results from this survey will be reported to the Pentagon Working Group. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has charged this group with reviewing the issues associated with properly implementing the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell. SWAN is serving as an advisor to the Working Group.

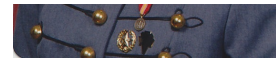
Top 10 West Point Cadet Resigns Over Unfair DADT Policy

Recently, West Point Cadet Katherine Miller, who was ranked #9 overall in her class, resigned from the Academy because of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. She is one more casualty of this policy that forces men and women to lie in order to serve their country. Her resignation letter cites incidences of lesbian baiting, which almost all women in the military, have endured.

Katherine's resignation represents another lost opportunity for women to continue to make inroads into senior military leadership and create the



type of sea change needed to move the institution forward and attract the best and brightest leaders this nation has to offer.



To read more about Katherine's story and her resignation letter, please go to Pam's House Blend: <http://www.pamhouseblend.com/diary/17000/top-ten-west-point-cadet-resigns-over-dadt-unwilling-to-compromise-her-integrity>

Major Margaret Witt Back in Court



On September 13, 2010, Major Margaret Witt was back in the U.S. District Court in Tacoma, Washington. She is seeking reinstatement in the US Military following her DADT discharge.

In 2008, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit had ruled that the Air Force must prove that discharging Major Witt was necessary for purposes of military readiness. This became the "Witt Standard" that was also used in the judge's decision in the Log Cabin Republican Case.

The Witt Standard states that the military must prove that an individual's conduct actually hurt morale and unit cohesion.

The ACLU is representing Major Witt and SWAN is actively monitoring this case. To read the ACLU press release go to: <http://www.aclu-wa.org/news/landmark-trial-aclu-wa-seeks-reinstatement-air-force-major-discharged-under-don-t-ask-don-t-tel>

US Lesbian Soldier Seeks Asylum in Canada

SWAN recently sent a letter of support to the Canadian courts on behalf of Bethany Smith, a lesbian soldier seeking asylum in Canada. Bethany was denied protection by her command after being repeatedly harassed and beaten, and receiving a death threat from soldiers in her unit at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Fort Campbell became notorious for its heinous treatment of LGBT soldiers after the murder of Private Barry Winchell in 1999.



Bethany's asylum case is currently under review by the Canadian Courts and is being handled by Canadian law firm of Galldin Liew, LLP.

Bethany's case highlights how far the military needs to go to create a safe work environment for its members. No one joins the military to be harassed or assaulted, but until the military adopts and implements a zero tolerance policy regarding harassment and abuse, cases like Bethany's will continue.

SWAN's Julianne Sohn Appears with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand to Discuss DADT Repeal

Julianne Sohn, SWAN's LGBT Project Coordinator appeared with New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand on the program "In The Life, Documentary Stories from the Gay Experience" discussing the current status of Don't Ask Don't Tell repeal.

For the full program, click here:

<http://www.inthelifetv.org/html/episodes/121.html>

The State of Equality will begin airing September 1st. To find out when it airs in your local area, to stream or download it, go to the In the Life website: www.inthelifetv.org.

SWAN's LGBT Women in the Military Helpline

DADT has impacted thousands of lives, but we often forget that each discharged veteran potentially carries emotional wounds with them into civilian life, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression, which rarely gets addressed by society.

Do you know a servicemember or veteran who has been impacted by Don't Ask, Don't Tell and needs someone to talk to? SWAN's LGBT Women in the Military Helpline provides peer counseling and referrals for those who need help. This service is free and confidential. Please call 1-888-729-2095.

We urge you to click on the Donate button below and make a contribution to SWAN. Your donations, regardless of amount, are tax-deductible and will go directly towards helping our team do this incredibly important work.

From all of us at SWAN, we thank you for your generous support!



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