





The SWAN Sound-Off

Service Women's Action Network on the ground

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SWAN Executive Director kicks off Servicemembers United National Tour to Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

PHILADELPHIA – The Service Women's Action Network joined forces with the Human Rights Campaign and Servicemembers United on the Voices of Honor Tour in an effort to highlight the discriminatory law that damages military readiness and national security.

SWAN, HRC, the nation's largest gay rights organization, SU, the nation's largest gay troops, veterans and straight allies group; and U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-PA), visited Philadelphia, Penn., on July 27 as a part of "Voices of Honor: A Generation Under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'"

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell is the only law that allows a segment of the federal government to actively discriminate against gays and lesbians," said Anuradha Bhagwati, SWAN Executive Director and a former Marine captain, who is speaking in Philadelphia alongside other veterans and Congressman Murphy.

According to a study released by Servicemembers Legal Defense Network in 1996 and 1997, women were disproportionately impacted by Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT). Women made up nearly 50 percent of the DADT



Anuradha Bhagwati, SWAN Executive Director and former Marine, speaks at the Voices of Honor Tour kick off July 27 in Philadelphia, Penn. (Photo by Jenn Hogg)

discharges in 2007 despite women making up approximately 15 percent of the armed forces.

"This policy is unjust and must be repealed," Bhagwati said. "While I served on active-duty, I saw the toll of Don't Ask, Don't Tell on my friend. She was an exemplary Marine officer. In fact, she wanted to continue serving our country, but the stress of living under the policy forced her to leave. Is this what we as a nation want? Do we want to continue to discharge or have qualified,

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The Service Women's Action Network has been hard at work the last few months and is starting to gain momentum as the year progresses. Attached is a short newsletter covering the recent events in which SWAN was involved.

Look for future (and more in-depth) newsletter to start hitting your inbox soon!

