

Rep. Rothman: "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Must End

Rep. Rothman Stands with Defense Secretary Robert Gates for Repeal

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Washington, DC — Representative Steve Rothman (D-NJ), a member of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, released the following statement in support of Defense Secretary Robert Gates's announcement that he is in favor of Congress repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in the coming weeks:

As a member of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, I agree with Defense Secretary Robert Gates's position that the discriminatory policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" must end during this Congress. I believe strongly that the U.S. Constitution, specifically the 14th Amendment, requires the government to apply our laws equally. That is why only negative conduct, not one's sexual orientation, should be grounds for dismissal from the armed services.

Additionally, in my opinion, our country's national security has been hurt by the U.S. Armed Forces having sent home more than 13,500 qualified, patriotic service members since 1994 who were willing and fit to serve this country. In each instance, there was no conduct unbecoming a member of the armed service.

Having paid many millions to train these individuals, and then having dismissed them in the absence of bad conduct, has also wasted many millions of precious taxpayer dollars.

Finally, as the U.S. continues to face dangerous enemies from all corners of the globe, and given the strains on our already overburdened warfighters, it makes no sense to turn away from service qualified, able and willing volunteers for our nation's military.

I am proud to stand with Secretary Gates in calling for an end to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to repeal this law in the final weeks of the 111th session.

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