
Rep. Rothman Supports New Bill to Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

Rep. Rothman: It is in our nation's national security interests to end the discriminatory policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" immediately. Equal justice and strengthening our national security cannot wait.

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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 the introduction of legislation later today by Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-PA) to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," on which Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) is the lead co-sponsor:

I enthusiastically lend my support to the effort by Majority Leader Hoyer and Representative Murphy to introduce standalone legislation to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT).

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 our country. In each instance, there was no conduct unbecoming a member of the armed service.

Investing many millions of dollars to train these individuals, and then dismissing them in the absence of bad conduct, has wasted many millions of precious taxpayer dollars and unnecessarily added to the strain on our already overburdened armed forces.

As the U.S. continues to face dangerous enemies from all corners of the globe, it makes no sense to turn away qualified, able and willing volunteers from the U.S. military.

The Pentagon's November 30, 2010 comprehensive study of the policy concluded that the repeal would not have a major impact on morale or readiness. The results also showed that 70% of our service members believe that

DADT's repeal would have either a positive effect or no effect on their ability to complete missions.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I also believe 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.

I am proud to stand with Majority Leader Hoyer and Representative Murphy in the fight to make this legislation law and repeal DADT this Congress. It is in our nation's national security interests to end the discriminatory policy of "Don't Ask Don't Tell" immediately. Equal justice and strengthening our national security cannot wait.

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