

Running head: DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL POLICY

*Style: mechanics
citations/references did not follow APA*

6

Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy

MSG Sheon Alderman

R12 Class 57 USASMA

SGM Wilkens

3 JAN 07

Abstract

As leaders, we must remain relevant while enforcing the Army's standards. The standards we carry on and off duty derive from traditional Army standards. As Senior NCOs, those we lead and mentor observe our actions. Soldiers are not the only one who judges our actions. As leaders, it is our moral obligation to support our Commander and Chief.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy

Throughout my career, I have heard the statement, "What you put into a Soldier is what you get out of them." As leaders, it is our responsibility to integrate ethical thinking into our subordinates. Before we can instill values in a Soldier, we must take an honest look at ourselves. We should ask the tough question, "Do I meet the standards that I am trying to instill in others?" We should hold ourselves to that standard; our soldiers will respect us for doing the right thing. As leaders, we must remain relevant while enforcing the Army's standards. The standards we carry on and off duty derive from traditional Army standards. As Senior NCOs, those we lead and mentor observe our actions. Soldiers are not the only one who judges our actions. "Society judges the actions of soldiers more severely than the civilians. Families have entrusted their children to our military and they expect us to conduct ourselves in an ethical manner. Parents expect us to teach their children to be responsible and well-disciplined Soldiers while instilling a high sense of ethical value. Once they leave the military, soldiers should be dependable, productive, and better prepared for the future. As I think about changes within the Army over the past years. For example, OD green uniforms to camouflage BDU's now ACU's. From the BDU cap to the beret. We do not have to agree with the changes but we have a moral obligation to conform. The Army is going through transformation, some leaders may not agree with the Army's new configuration. As leaders, it is our moral obligation to support our Commander and Chief.

Morals are rules that govern our behavior. Values are what our families instill in us. They are beliefs, which we hold true. Virtues are the integrity that one desires for himself and a productive society. I would define ethics as conducting ourselves in an orderly manner, which is acceptable in today's society. Some rules and regulations are written, others we inherit. Norms have made us who we are today. Values and norms clarify a Soldier's character and personality. As senior NCOs, we are the role models for today's soldiers. Our ethical and moral values are one to model. Knowing this, we must understand what we believe as professional leaders. The Army established a professional standard of ethics for Soldiers at its inception. American society has changed since the 1600s, the Army has continued to stand firm on standards established by our ancestors with minimal change.

I would like focus on the topic of gays and lesbians serving openly in the military.: In 1994, former President Bill Clinton made a promise to accommodate gays and lesbians while on the campaign trail. Once elected he introduced the excursion law commonly know as the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy. Early this year in a CBS radio interview, Former President Clinton acknowledged that the "Don't ask don't tell" policy was ineffective. He stated if his wife was elected President, he would help her revise this policy. Several prominent politicians on capital hill opposed the "Don't ask don't tell" policy because it is counter productive against the War on Terrorism. The Service members Legal Defense Network issued a new report on 13 JUN 05 noting that many highly trained military specialists — including combat engineers and linguists — are being discharged involuntarily because of their sexual orientation. Meanwhile, the Pentagon "is facing extreme challenges in recruiting and retaining troops." Their report states that, "The military discharged 653 men and women in 2004 under the gay ban, the second lowest total since "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was implemented. The Pentagon discharges include at least

41 healthcare professionals, 30 sonar and radar specialists, 20 combat engineers, 17 law enforcement agents, 12 security guards, 7 biological, and chemical warfare specialists who were fired because of sexual orientation. At least nine language specialists were also discharged. The SLDN analysis also reveals that, based on other data obtained from different sources, less than one-quarter of all 2004 discharges under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' were from units deployed in support of war operations, suggesting the services are far less likely to discharge gays and lesbians serving on the frontlines. Gay discharges have declined by 47% since September 11, 2001." SLDN Executive Director, C. Dixon Osburne, said: "The military continues to sacrifice national security and military readiness in favor of simple prejudice. Americans do not care if the helicopter pilot rescuing a wounded soldier or the medic treating that soldier is gay." It cost over 100 million dollars to recruit and retrain replacements for Soldiers who were discharged in the few years. That money could have been better spent enforcing the War on Terrorism. Log Cabin Republicans applaud introduction of the Military Readiness Enhancement Act. The legislation, introduced by Congressman Marty Meehan (D-MA), seeks to repeal the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, doesn't work," said Log Cabin Republicans President Patrick Guerrero. "The report of the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Makes it clear that Don't Ask, Don't Tell harms military readiness. Log Cabin is proud to join with Service members Legal Defense Network and other allied organization in the fight to allow our brave service members to serve openly and honestly in defense of our freedoms." In the Past Year, Log Cabin filed suit in federal court in Los Angeles on behalf of active duty gays and lesbian service members fighting the global war on terror.

Log Cabin Republicans is the nation's largest organization of Republicans who support fairness, freedom, and equality for gay and lesbian Americans.

Log Cabin has state and local chapters nationwide, a full-time Washington office, and a federal political action committee. The case has not yet been brought before the courts. Representative Marty Meehan (D-MA) introduced a House bill: the Military Readiness Enhancement Act. It would lift the military's ban on homosexuals. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), a member of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations said; "We've tried the policy. I do not think it works. In addition, we have spent a lot of money enforcing it. People who've signed up to serve our country, we should be thanking them." Four Republican representatives — including conservatives Wayne Gilchrest of Maryland have joined with 81 Democrats as co-sponsors. Gilchrest used to be in favor of the ban, but changed his mind because of respect for gay Marines with whom he served in Vietnam. Another influence is his brother, who is gay. He feels that the mood in Congress is shifting. He said; "When this issue comes up, members who believe that gays shouldn't be in the military are now more hesitant to voice their opinion. Many of us who feel the other way have come out of the closet, so to speak. A year ago, I would have been uncomfortable expressing my feelings." An argument has been made that if gay and lesbians are permitted to serve openly it would hurt moral and readiness, A recent CNN poll, taken in May 2005, resulted in six out of ten polled say they would support gays in the military , half of that number ten years ago.

Currently fourteen countries allow gays and lesbians to serve openly. Among the countries of the Western industrialized world, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. Within these countries, no negative morale issues have been reported because of gay and lesbians being allowed to serve openly. Would leaders be in an ethical dilemma if the military would allow gays and lesbians to serve openly?

Edward J. Hill
APP Front & Guides
References

Army Policy

7

- (1) Service members legal Defense Network, 13 Jun 05
- (2) CBS radio interview, 1994
- (3) CNN poll, May 05