



Support to the DoD Comprehensive Review Working Group Analyzing the Impact of Repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

Volume 2: Findings from the Qualitative Research Tasks

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This report presents the results of systematic thematic analysis of five sets of qualitative data:

- Notes from 81 Information Exchange Forums (IEFs) and 29 Leadership Discussion Groups (Discussion Groups).
- Notes from 119 Service Member Small Member Focus Groups (military focus groups) conducted with Service members at these same locations.
- Notes from 7 Family Small Focus Groups, 9 Family Readiness Coordinator Discussion Groups, and 12 Family Information Exchange Forums (Family IEFs) and 4 Service Member IEFs with family members attending.
- Transcripts of 160 on-line dialogs from the confidential communication mechanism web site, 80 with Service members who identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or uncertain of their sexual orientation and 80 with those self-identifying as heterosexual.
- Inbox comments: for Phase 1, a total of 546 free-form verbatim “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” inbox comments received during April, May and June, roughly twice as many from females as from males; for Phase 2: 1505 inbox comments received from April through August, divided more or less equally by Service.

Looking across all five datasets, some top-line findings emerge from these qualitative analyses, which are explored in greater depth in Chapter 7. These findings are briefly highlighted here.

Broadly speaking, we discerned two relatively distinct perspectives on repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) law, the main components of which are briefly presented below.

1.1.1 Those with More Positive Views of the Impact of Repeal

Those expressing more positive views of the impact and implementation of repeal of DADT tended to regard repeal as a matter of civil rights and justice for gays and lesbians, to believe that the time for repeal has come, and to view repeal as essentially analogous to past efforts to integrate African Americans and women. These Service members argued that the military should lead civilian society in this important area, rather than be led by it. While acknowledging that resistance to repeal may temporarily impair unit cohesion, they believed in the long run Service members will adapt,

particularly if effective leadership is exercised, and the military and the country will be the stronger and the better for it. Those who held more positive views of repeal stressed that gays and lesbians have already shown themselves to be competent and honorable Service members, and in the greater scheme of things the ability to do the job matters more than sexual orientation. They also often pointed to the emotional and social costs of DADT to their gay and lesbian fellow Service members. Both those holding positive and those with more negative views of the anticipated impact of repeal stressed the importance of clear guidance and effective leadership to the implementation process. However, the former were especially concerned about the need for active and consistent support “from the top down” to insure the policy receives the backing it will need. At the same time, they were emphatic that repeal be administered fairly and equitably, with gays and lesbians held to the same standards as heterosexual Service members.

1.1.2 Those with More Negative Views of the Impact of Repeal

Those with more negative views of the anticipated impact of repeal tended to see it as an infringement on their own and their chaplains’ rights to freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Many regarded homosexuality as sinful and counter to the precepts of their faith, rejecting the comparison to previous integration efforts on the grounds that, unlike race and gender, sexual orientation is a choice. Believing the drive for repeal is motivated by a civilian political agenda, they argued that a military at war can ill afford to expend scarce resources to satisfy a small minority. If DADT is repealed, they anticipated negative consequences for unit cohesion and morale as well as recruitment and retention, and were especially concerned about maintaining personal privacy in housing and showers. Those with more negative views of its impact also argued for the imperative of clear guidance, effective leadership and equitable enforcement in implementing the new policy if repeal does occur. However, they were concerned the policy might be administered in a way showing favoritism to gays and lesbians, and result in increased paperwork associated with baseless Equal Opportunity (EO) complaints. In comparison with those holding more positive views on the impact of repeal, those tending to express more negative views were less convinced of the value and efficacy of educational and training efforts in facilitating the implementation of repeal.

1.1.3 Other Variations

The two perspectives sketched out above represent *constructed ideal types*; that is, any given individual may not have expressed each and every one of these views, but they tended to cluster together as a

coherent package. All the self-identified gay and lesbian Service members in our data sources—the eighty individuals whose confidential dialog transcripts we analyzed, as well as the inbox correspondents who voluntarily divulged their sexual orientation—had highly positive views of the impact of repeal of DADT. Their perspectives on repeal were very much like those described in Section 1.1.1 above. In addition, as explored in Chapter 6, these Service members also offered powerful statements of how the need to keep silent or risk separation has negatively affected virtually every aspect of their own and their family members’ lives.

In the chapters that follow, we will: (a) further describe these views using the Service member’s own words whenever possible, and (b) explicate sometimes nuanced variations in how these distinctive constellations of views break out by gender, self-identified sexual orientation, and to a lesser extent, by Service.

1.2 Methodology

This section of the report describes the methodology used in collecting and analyzing these five sets of qualitative data.

1.2.1 Data Collection and Data Sources

1.2.1.1 Information Exchange Forums (IEFs), Leadership Discussion Groups and Focus Groups

The DoD Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG) was charged with systematically engaging members of the Armed Forces to assess any significant impacts of repeal of DADT on military readiness, unit cohesion, morale, and family readiness. Participants in all groups were encouraged to describe their experiences in working with presumed gay or lesbian Service members, express opinions about features that should be part of an implementation plan, and suggest issues to be addressed by military leadership.

Three types of groups were convened:

- **Information Exchange Forums for Military Service Members and Family Members (IEF):** IEFs were typically large public forums (averaging about 300

attendees) at which two or three senior members of the CRWG provided information about the purpose of the CRWG and its work, and then fielded questions from the audience of Service members, many of whom were told to attend. A total of 81 Military IEFs were conducted, analysis of which supported the development of a Cross-Site Analytic Memo (see Appendix H) as well as the findings presented in Chapter 2. Findings from an additional 16 IEFs held for family members (4 of which also included Service members), with a purpose similar to that of the military IEFs, are reported in Chapter 5.

- **Leadership Discussion Groups:** These unscripted discussions, which had much more of a back-and-forth flavor than the IEFs, were conducted at most sites. The senior leaders (O7-O10) at the site were invited to a meeting with the CRWG Leadership to discuss issues associated with the potential repeal. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback to CRWG Leadership. Findings from the analysis of 29 Leadership Discussion Groups are presented in Chapter 2.
- **Service Member Small Focus Groups:** Small groups of no more than 12 individuals were asked to participate in moderator-led discussions. The discussions were led by Westat moderators using a set of scripted questions covering topics such as unit cohesion, recruitment and retention, and leadership. Westat staff worked closely with the CRWG to ensure that the focus group script was responsive to the topics of greatest interest and was constructed in a manner to facilitate participant input. The final version of the Service Member Small Focus Group script can be found in Appendix A.

Groups were comprised of similarly ranked members of the military (e.g., a focus group would be held with E1-E4s, another with E5-E6s, and a third with E7-E9s. Separate focus groups would be held with O1-O3 and O4-O6s.) A total of 119 Small Focus Groups were conducted throughout the United States and at several OCONUS sites; notes from all groups were analyzed and the findings are reported in either the Cross-Site Analytic Memo (see Appendix H) or in Chapter 3 of this report.

- **Family Small Focus Groups:** These small groups were similar to those described above for the active military members but were targeted to spouses and other family of active military members. As above, a set of scripted questions was used to elicit opinions about the impact of DADT's repeal on family health or health care, base housing, spouse or family member employment, impacts on children, changes to community life on the base, integration in non-military life outside of the United States, deployment readiness, and the family's financial situation. Westat worked with the CRWG to refine the Family Focus Group script, a copy of which is located in Appendix B. The seven Family Focus Groups that were conducted were analyzed and are reported on in Chapter 5.
- **Family Readiness Discussion Groups:** These unscripted group discussions were introduced in mid-August, 2010, during site visits to Little Rock, AR, and Europe. Members of the local military family support center staff at each military site, along with the volunteer leadership from family readiness groups, were invited to a discussion of issues surrounding the repeal of DADT and its associated service policies. The

qualitative team analyzed notes from nine such groups, the results of which are reported in Chapter 5.

Westat was prohibited from using audio or digital recordings of any of kind in these discussions. Westat note takers attended each engagement, to create a paraphrased record of each discussion. Note taking templates (see Appendices C, D, and E) were developed to assist in recording the content of these group sessions. All note takers participated in one or more training sessions to ensure consistent use of these templates; for the Service Member Small Focus Groups, note takers were instructed not to record any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) for any of the participants, including gender. These sets of written notes served as the source data for the analyses presented in Chapters 2, 3, and 5.

Limitations of these Data

For analytic purposes, use of these notes placed two significant limitations on the primary source data: (1) we could draw on fewer direct quotes than if we had been able to use recordings or verbatim transcripts, and (2) we could not systematically analyze differences by gender of participants in the focus groups.

Second, invitations to military members and their spouses to attend focus groups were issued by military installation staff in consultation with the CRWG following different sets of criteria for different groups. The absence of specific information on the demographic composition of each focus group makes it important not to present the results in a manner that might suggest that generalization to larger military populations is possible. (Such statistical generalization is properly the province of the survey components of our study.)

1.2.1.2 Confidential Dialogs

The confidential on-line dialogs were created to offer Service members the opportunity to provide confidential input about the DADT policy and the impact of its possible repeal. They are the only source of primary data from self-identified gay and lesbian Service members. Once logged onto the web site, the Service member was encouraged to engage in a live, text-based dialog that made use of a semi-structured interview. (The script for these dialogs can be found in Appendix F.) Interactive queries sought information from all respondents about their Service branch, experience in serving

with a gay or lesbian Service member, and sexual orientation. The timing of the dialogs coincided with the field period of the Service Member Survey, from July 7 through August 15, 2010. After an initial set of common questions, the script branched in two somewhat different directions, according to whether respondents identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or uncertain of their sexual orientation (GLBU), or as heterosexual.

Respondents self-identifying as heterosexual or refusing to answer the question about sexual orientation were asked follow-up questions to gather opinions about such issues as:

- Possible impacts that repeal of the law might have on the respondents, their families, their units, and the military as a whole, and how a repeal could be effectively implemented;
- Religious or moral beliefs about gays or lesbians, and whether those beliefs would make it difficult to continue serving and requiring intervention by leadership;
- Experiences with relationships with someone who is gay or lesbian; and
- How the repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law would affect a decision to stay in the military.

Respondents who self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or unsure of their sexual orientation were asked to respond to another set of questions on such issues as:

- Identification of most important issues for new policies should the law be repealed;
- Presumed impacts of repeal on respondents, their families, units, and the military as a whole;
- Actions needed for an effective implementation of new policies upon repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell;”
- Experiences or witnessing of harassment, discrimination, or homophobia due to current policies; and
- How the repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law would affect their decision to stay in the military.

Once all personally identifying information (PII) was removed, Westat qualitative analysts had access to verbatim transcripts of these on-line exchanges. For this report, the qualitative analysis team reviewed a total of 160 transcripts—80 from self-identified GLBU Service members, and 80 from individuals who self-identified as heterosexual or who refused to answer. Findings from the analysis of these transcripts are reported in Chapter 6.

For analytic purposes, these transcripts had several advantages over the IEF, Discussion Group and focus group notes: most notably, they produced a verbatim account linked to an individual with specific characteristics. Further, as noted, of all sources utilized for these analyses, the dialogs were the only one that provided systematic information on the respondent's sexual orientation, arguably the single most important differentiating characteristic in this study.¹

For the confidential dialogs, we analyzed an equal number of transcripts from GLBU Service members (80) and heterosexuals (80), even though those who self-identified as GLBU represent a relatively small percent of the respondents taking part in the dialogs. The analytic rationale for this is simple: the dialogs are the only forum in which gay and lesbian Service members could express their views and concerns. We wanted to ensure that these important voices would be heard, and in sufficient numbers to allow us to discern any differences in perspective within this group. Purposively selecting “information-rich” cases for analysis (not to be confused either with oversampling for statistical purposes or convenience sampling) is grounded in the assumptions of qualitative research, where the object is to help to illuminate a particular issue or question rather than to statistically generalize to a larger known population. Cases are selected on the basis of their expected utility as analytic levers for exploring the particular question or issue at hand.²

Consequently, we refrain from any implication that these findings may be statistically generalized to a larger population of gay and lesbian or heterosexual Service members for two reasons: (1) purposive sampling techniques were employed, and (2) Service members who chose to engage in these sometimes lengthy dialogs—particularly those willing to self-identify as gay or lesbian—were no doubt highly motivated to share their views. That these respondents are not statistically representative does not detract from the value of learning their views. Indeed, for qualitative analytic purposes, the most motivated respondents may better reflect the “ideal types” associated with a distinctive constellation of views vis-à-vis the anticipated impact of a repeal of DADT.

1.2.1.3 Inbox Comments

Service members were given the opportunity to offer free-form inbox comments starting on April 18, 2010. All told, nearly 70,000 such comments were received between April 18 and August 15.³ As

¹ As shall be seen, a small subset of correspondents offering inbox comments self-identified as gay or lesbian.

² Patton, M. Q. (2002) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. 3rd Edition. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. p. 45, pp.230-246

³ To ensure sufficient time for analysis, our cut-off date for inclusion in analysis was August 15, 2010, although in inbox remained open.

with the confidential dialogs, these comments offered an “unadulterated” written statement that could be linked to a Service member’s specific characteristics (gender, Service, pay grade group, and Active or Reserve status). As a source of qualitative data they presented the further advantage of being entirely free-form, thus enabling the correspondents to write whatever was on their minds. While some comments were only one or two lines long, others read like mini-essays, offering insights into the sometimes complicated ways in which these correspondents were constructing their views on repeal.

For the first phase of inbox comment analyses, using the principles of purposive selection discussed above for the confidential dialogs, we selected roughly twice as many comments from female as from male Service members because we wanted to see if gender seemed to make a difference to respondents’ views on repeal of DADT. As noted in our discussion of the focus group data, we could not look at the Service member focus group data by gender, and could do so for the family focus groups and family member IEFs only indirectly insofar as these groups were almost entirely female. Consequently, although suspecting that female Service members might differ from males in their views on the impact and implementation of repeal of DADT, the inbox comment data provided our first real opportunity to systematically examine this issue. Especially because the focus group data had revealed little in the way of differences by branch of Service,⁴ for the second phase of the inbox comment analysis, we selected roughly equal numbers of comments from each of the five Service branches.

As was true for the confidential dialogs, the individuals who took the time to compose and type sometimes lengthy comments are a self-selected and likely more highly motivated group than the “general population” of Service members. Thus, the same caveats about generalizability apply. Nevertheless, the overriding value of all these qualitative datasets, singularly and taken together, is in illustrating the content and variety of viewpoints on the perceived impact of repeal.

1.2.2 Analytic Approach

Westat’s qualitative data analysis team followed a number of steps to ensure the quality and consistency of our approach to coding and analyzing these somewhat disparate bodies of data. First and foremost, we put considerable thought and effort into development and refinement of a

⁴ As will be seen in Chapter 6, this was mainly an artifact of timing, in that the Army and Air Force were heavily represented among correspondents in the earlier (April-June) period.

Comprehensive Coding Scheme that could be applied across all the datasets. The scheme, presented in simplified form in Table 1-1, was created by carefully reading through the different data sources and developing logical thematic categories and subcategories by which to code or “tag” the data. Not surprisingly, some categories were derived directly from the structure of questions in the Military Service Member Small Focus Group Script and the Family Focus Group Script. However, many instead came from a “ground up” reading of the themes and topics expressed by the respondents and correspondents. For example, we developed some overarching categories—*Factors Seen as Influencing Individual Service Members’ Views of Repeal*—to help ourselves and our readers better understand how respondents were broadly framing their views of the anticipated impact of repeal of DADT. The analysts benefited from applying a common conceptual framework that helped to integrate across the different bodies of data without forcing them into a single mold. Given the large quantities of different types of qualitative data involved, and the speed with which the analysis and write-up had to be accomplished, the use of NVivo8 qualitative data analysis software was essential.

As a systematic and intensely disciplined process, qualitative data analysis is poorly understood and often undervalued. Although these findings cannot be statistically generalized to any larger population, taken as a whole, they provide a wealth of important information on Service members’ and family members’ views of repeal and implementation of DADT. We refrain from presenting the findings in quantitative terms because it is easy to misconstrue qualitative findings as “watered down” survey results, and thus miss what is really important about their content when they are arrayed in this way. Moreover, importance in qualitative analysis is not only, or even primarily, a matter of frequency. When we present the findings we provide some notion of the relative frequency with which a theme was expressed by the respondents only as a rough guide for the reader. It is the content of the views that deserves emphasis.

Table 1-1. Comprehensive Coding Scheme

I. Contextual Issues

A.	Timing
B.	Politics
C.	Legal and Constitutional Issue
D.	Relationship to Non-military Community
E.	Social Experiment
F.	Comparison to Foreign Militaries

II. Individual Influences and Experiences

A.	Religious/Moral Beliefs/Values Variations
B.	Demographic/ Regional Variations
C.	Individual's Upbringing Related to Tolerance of Diversity
D.	Preconceived Ideas of Gays and Lesbians
E.	Other
F.	Service Branch Variations
G.	Current Openness with Other Service Members

III. General Impact

A.	Overall Impact
B.	Distraction
C.	Impact Will Vary Over Time
D.	Impact Will Depend On Individual Characteristics Of Gay/Lesbian Service Members
E.	Image of Military
F.	Military Values
G.	Current Presence Of Gays & Lesbians
H.	Potential for Openness

IV. Impact of Repeal on Military Life

A.	Impact on Unit Cohesion
B.	Staffing Issues
C.	Privacy Concerns
D.	Recruitment
E.	Retention
F.	Recommendations To Others
G.	Access To Services For Military Personnel
H.	Impact On Personal Effectiveness Of Service Member

V. Impact of Repeal on Family and Community Life

A.	Overall
B.	Gay Families Living In BAH/Next Door
C.	Effects On Children
D.	"Etiquette"/Concerns Relative To Social Events
E.	Participation in Family Readiness Groups
F.	Chaplaincy Services
G.	Impact On Personal Relationships

VI. Implementation of Repeal

A.	Policies and Guidelines
B.	Leadership/Role Models
C.	Process of Implementation

1.3 Structure of the Report

Chapter 2 briefly summarizes the issues and concerns raised about repeal of DADT at the Military IEFs and Leadership Discussion Groups. Chapter 3 offers a comprehensive discussion of the findings from the Service Member Small Focus Groups, closely paralleling the structure of the Comprehensive Coding Scheme. Chapter 4 presents the findings from two sets of analyses of inbox comment data, the first focused on discerning differences by gender, and the second on exploring any such differences by Service branch. Chapter 5 offers results pertaining to the Family Small Focus Groups, Family IEFs and Family Readiness Discussion Groups. Finally, in Chapter 6, we explore the views of both gay and lesbian and heterosexual Service members who participated in the confidential on-line dialogs. Lastly, Chapter 7 synthesizes the findings across all five datasets.

CHAPTER 2. IEFS AND LEADERSHIP DISCUSSIONS

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents the results of systematic analysis of 81 Information Exchange Forums (IEFs) with Service members and 29 Leadership Discussion Groups (DGs) held in locations as presented in Table 2-1.⁵

Table 2-1. Service Member IEFS and Discussion Groups

Location	Date	IEFs	DGs
Ft. Eustis, VA	22-Apr	1	0
Norfolk, VA	April 23-24	1	0
Ft. Bragg, NC	27-Apr	5	0
Lackland AFB, TX	4-May	1	0
Ft. Sam Houston, TX	6-May	2	0
Ft. Hood TX	7-May	3	0
Southern California	May 24-27	8	6
Colorado	June 15-17	7	5
Metro DC	June 18 & 22	3	0
Georgia/South Carolina	July 6-8	3	1
Hawaii	July 11-17	17	2
Staten Island, NY	12-Jul	1	1
Japan	August 1-6	9	2
Chicago & Wisconsin	August 6-8	3	0
USCG Headquarters, DC	9-Aug	2	0
Little Rock, AR	August 12-14	4	0
Europe	August 12-21	11	5
Andrews AFB	31-Aug	0	1
USNA	1-Sep	0	3
USCG Academy	14-Sep	0	3
Total		81	29

In this brief chapter, we present in bulleted form the main issues raised in these groups, roughly following the thematic categories in the Comprehensive Coding Structure presented in Chapter 1. Since all of the issues raised in these groups are discussed in much greater detail in the chapters that follow, we present only overall findings.

⁵ For more details on the numbers, dates and specific locations of the IEFS see Appendix G. While these IEFS were predominantly composed of military Service members, a few held in Europe included a small number of family members. This chapter also incorporates Westat's review of notes from IEFS conducted in Virginia, North Carolina and Texas conducted under an earlier contract.

2.2 Military IEFs

By and large, the content of the issues raised by Service members in the IEFs did not vary a great deal by location, Service or over time. What did vary is the tone and tenor of the discussions; the earlier IEFs held in California and Colorado overall were more negative in the views expressed towards repeal of DADT and sometimes had a strident tone, whereas those that took place later tended to be more balanced in views and measured in tone. The vast majority of attendees at all IEFs—generally over 80 percent—indicated they had served with individuals they knew or suspected to be gay or lesbian. However, the percentages were smaller for the IEFs held in Europe, and, especially, in Japan. Overall, few people raised their hands to indicate that they thought serving with these individuals had affected military effectiveness.

2.2.1 Contextual Issues

2.2.1.1 Comparisons to Past Integration Efforts

Questions were asked about and comparisons made to past efforts to integrate African Americans and women into the military:

- Some attendees thought repeal of DADT is analogous to past efforts to integrate African Americans and women, and the military could derive “lessons learned” from these past efforts that could be profitably applied if DADT were to be repealed.
- Others expressed the sentiment that the integration of gays and lesbians is fundamentally different than these past efforts because, unlike race and gender, sexual orientation is a choice.

2.2.1.2 Comparisons to Foreign Militaries

Questions were asked about and comparisons made to foreign militaries that have integrated gays and lesbians:

- Attendees requested more information about lessons learned based on the experiences of other militaries that have undergone a similar process of allowing openly gay individuals to serve.

- Some attendees said they believed any attempt to look at the experiences of other militaries would be a false comparison because of differences in the size of the forces as well as cultural differences between the U.S. and other countries, even other Anglophone nations or those in Western Europe.

2.2.1.3 Legal Issues

- Attendees asked for clarification on the legal issues surrounding repeal, particularly the purview of DOMA and the situation in states that recognize same-sex marriages. Some expressed concern that repeal of DADT could set a precedent for changes to state and federal laws on same-sex marriages.
- Attendees inquired as to whether repeal of DADT would apply to transgendered individuals as well as gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.
- Attendees raised concerns about inconsistencies between repeal and the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and inquired about whether specific provisions of the code (for example, those applying to sodomy) would still remain in force.
- Attendees asked about reinstatement policies that might be put in place for Service members who had been separated due to disclosure of their sexual orientation under DADT.
- Attendees asked whether same-sex partners would be eligible for military benefits (e.g., health insurance, dependent care, chaplain services) if the military were to permit legal civil unions or marriages for gays and lesbians. Some said this would cause a financial strain.
- Attendees raised questions as to how repeal would affect harassment, discrimination and equal opportunity (EO) policies. In this framework, they asked if, under repeal, gays and lesbians would have to declare their sexual orientation and/or would be considered a protected class for EO purposes. Some argued that this would create a problematic situation.
- Attendees asked whether limitations would be placed on the types of jobs gay or lesbian Service members would be able to hold, for example, in the infantry, Special Forces, or in close quarters on small ships or submarines.
- Attendees asked if there would be a provision, akin to a “conscientious objector” status, for individual Service members who felt they could no longer serve in good conscience under repeal of DADT.
- Attendees raised questions about how repeal of DADT would work when Service members are stationed in countries where homosexuality is illegal.

2.2.2 Individual Influences and Experiences

2.2.2.1 Religious/Moral Beliefs/Values

- Some attendees voiced their own religious objections to homosexuality and/or noted that homosexuality is considered immoral by many Christians, who make up the majority of the military; hence, repeal of DADT would be unpalatable to this majority group.
- Some attendees noted that individuals who did not embrace the high moral standards of military did not have to serve. They argued that military service is a privilege, not a right, and that gay and lesbian Service members had agreed to the terms of DADT when they signed on.
- In contrast to the above, some attendees said that DADT goes against military moral standards of honesty and integrity by forcing Service members to hide or lie about their sexual orientation in order to serve. They expressed concerns about the personal and psychological costs to gay and lesbian Service members.
- Attendees raised questions and concerns about the repercussions of repeal for chaplains whose religious tenets condemn homosexuality as sinful.

2.2.2.2 Tolerance of Differences

- Some attendees said even those who disapprove of homosexuality should be tolerant of different lifestyles, stressing the importance of acceptance of gays and lesbians as people, if not of homosexuality *per se*.
- Some attendees indicated that previous experiences—such as having been raised in settings with many diverse groups, or having seen a number of peers “come out” in high school—had made them more tolerant and accepting of differences.

2.2.3 General Impact of Repeal

- Attendees asked about the estimated total financial costs of implementing a repeal of DADT (some also included the costs of the Comprehensive Review), with some expressing concerns about paying for the high price tag in a time of fiscal austerity.
- Some attendees said repeal of DADT would be a distraction from more important priorities and a drain of time and resources when attention should be focused on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Some attendees pointed to the likely negative impact of repeal on health and health care, expressing concerns about contracting or being exposed to HIV and AIDS.
- Some attendees said they expected little to change were DADT to be repealed given that the military has already *de facto* accommodated to the presence of gay and lesbian Service members.
- Some attendees judged that the overall impact of repeal will vary according to the individual gay or lesbian Service member's ability to do his or her job, with professionalism ultimately trumping sexual orientation. Having served with others they knew to be gay or lesbian was a "non-issue" because these individuals were good at their jobs.

2.2.4 Impact of Repeal on Military Life

2.2.4.1 Impact on Overall Unit Cohesion

- Some attendees were concerned about the potential impact of repeal on overall unit cohesion, particularly for small units or in the infantry where unit members form a tight bond or depend on one another very closely.
- Attendees expressed strong concerns about maintenance of privacy and enforcement of standards of behavior in housing/berthing/billeting, showering, and use of bathroom facilities. Some argued that repeal would necessitate creation of separate facilities to accommodate gay males, heterosexual males, lesbians, and heterosexual females.
- Specific concerns were voiced about the possibility of violence erupting in reaction to repeal, including both same-sex sexual assaults and gay bashing and acts of harassment.
- Some attendees said that they would find it difficult to witness public displays of affection (PDAs) between gay and lesbian Service members and expressed concerns repeal would foster advocacy activities or other "public proclamations" on the part of gay and lesbian Service members.

2.2.4.2 Recruitment and Retention

- Attendees asked about the current state of knowledge on the estimated number of gays and lesbians now serving in the military as well as the potential impact of repeal on military recruitment. Some questioned whether more Service members would leave than would join as a result of the repeal.
- Some attendees indicated that they or others they knew would likely leave the military if repeal were to occur, while others in attendance at the IEFs said they believed in the end most Service members would remain.

2.2.5 Impact of Repeal on Family and Community Life

2.2.5.1 Base Housing

- Some attendees asked whether gay and lesbian families would be permitted to live in base housing, expressing concerns as to how they would explain the presence and behavior of these families to their own children, whom they wanted to shield from exposure to the gay lifestyle.

2.2.6 Implementation of Repeal

2.2.6.1 Importance of Clear Policies and Guidelines

- Attendees at these IEFs uniformly stressed the importance of having clear policies and guidelines in place at all levels to guide the implementation process if DADT is repealed. Some recommended taking a phased-in approach to the overall process.

2.2.6.2 Role of Leaders

- Attendees also emphasized the key role to be played by leaders in guiding implementation. Some noted the importance of leaders separating their personal perspectives on repeal from their role as implementers and enforcers of the policy.

2.2.6.3 Education and Training

- Some attendees stressed the importance of educating Service members and their families to help dispel myths and misinformation about gays and lesbians, but others thought education would make no difference to people holding entrenched beliefs against homosexuality.
- Some attendees thought additional training would be needed to facilitate implementation of repeal, adding that it should be added onto already existing training packages to decrease burden. Others expressed the view that they were “trained out” and additional training would be ineffectual and even counterproductive.

2.3 Leadership Discussion Groups

For the most part, the topics discussed and issues raised in the Leadership Discussion Groups did not differ appreciably from those addressed in the IEFs; the main differences had to do with the greater emphasis in these high level discussions on how to explain and enact policy and the most effective approaches for implementing the process of repeal. Consequently, to avoid redundancy, in this section we will primarily focus on issues of implementation and leadership and not repeat the issues already covered in Section 2.2 above, which will in any case be elaborated in considerable detail in the chapters that follow.

2.3.1 Implementation of Repeal

2.3.1.1 Justifying and Explaining Repeal

- Leaders sought guidance on how to train Service members and educate them on the policy, particularly when some have deeply held religious and moral beliefs opposed to homosexuality. They generally acknowledged that leadership is the key piece in successful implementation.
- Some leaders noted the challenges of learning how to counsel gay and lesbian Service members and deal with them as people and “not stereotypes.”
- Leaders commented on the importance of being precise in the language of the law and the policy, since “words are everything” and the policy is likely to have “a cascading effect.” Some also discussed the broader import of being sensitive to language- for instance, avoiding use of terms that can be read as derogatory to gays and lesbians, such as belittling something by calling it “gay.”
- A few leaders suggested that it is more appropriate to analogize repeal of DADT to religious integration of the military rather than integration of African Americans or women.

2.3.1.2 Processes of Implementation

- Leaders requested help on how to resolve difficulties that might arise in situations in which there is a disconnect between the “on-base” and “off-base” situation—for example, in states that do not recognize same-sex marriages—and in other legal “grey areas” that may arise.

- Leaders asked if there would be a phase-in period for implementing repeal and a separate budget to support repeal so as not to divert resources from other needed areas. But while some thought it would be advisable to take a more gradual approach, others argued that the longer the wait, the more difficult the process in the long run.
- Leaders emphasized the importance of setting aside their own personal feelings on the issue in order to “lead the way” on repeal in an equitable and fair-minded fashion.

2.3.1.3 Suggestions

- Leaders made several suggestions of procedures or products they thought would make the process of implementing repeal smoother or more effective: these included providing “case studies” to use as models in guiding application of policy, offering targeted conflict resolution tools, and, more broadly, offering a forward-looking perspective recognizing that there will be more bumps in the road in the initial stages of implementation.

Chapter 3, presenting the findings from the Service Member Small Focus Groups in considerable detail and depth, elaborates this discussion of the IEFs and Leadership Discussion Groups.

CHAPTER 3. FOCUS GROUPS

3.1 Overview

This chapter is based on review, systematic analysis, and coding of notes from 119 Service member focus groups,⁶ conducted in the following locations as shown in Table 3-1:

Table 3-1. Service Member Focus Groups

Location	Date	Number of Focus Groups
Virginia	April 22-24	23
North Carolina	April 27-28	10
Southern California	May 24-27	26
Colorado	June 15-17	18
Metro DC	June 18 & 22	8
Georgia/South Carolina	July 6-8	10
Hawaii	July 11-17	18
Staten Island, NY	July 12	2
Japan	August 1-6	2
Little Rock, AR	August 12-14	2
Total		119

We present the key findings from these groups following the thematic categories in the comprehensive coding structure developed by Westat's qualitative analysis team. In Section 3.2, we describe the individual-level factors (e.g., religious beliefs and values, upbringing) that participants felt might affect how any Service member would handle repeal, and then explore the general impacts (Section 3.3) that focus group members thought repeal might have on the military. In Section 3.4, we present findings for participants' views on how repeal may affect unit functioning, including the perceived effect on task and social cohesion, any Military Occupational Specialties from which participants felt gays and lesbians should be excluded, as well as the perceived impact on recruitment, retention, and their willingness to recommend military service to others. Section 3.5 explores how focus group participants felt repeal might affect their families, and in Section 3.6, we describe those contextual factors (e.g., politics, social experimentation) that were often described as motivating the push for repeal. In Section 3.7, we present participants' recommendations for

⁶ Although the Virginia and North Carolina groups were conducted under an earlier contract, our qualitative analysis team was given access to and subsequently reviewed notes from these engagements. Findings from the analysis of those notes as well as those from the California engagements were incorporated in an interim memo submitted to the CRWG on July 2, 2010; those initial findings also formed the foundation of the comprehensive coding scheme that ultimately underpins the findings in this report.

measures the military might consider taking in order to ensure a smoother implementation if repeal does occur.

We offer several caveats. First, when reviewing the statements used to illustrate various points of view, the reader should bear in mind that our records of each focus group—the “raw data”—are not transcripts of audio recordings, but notes typed by note takers as they observed each discussion. Where possible, we have used statements from participants that were *presented by the note takers as near-verbatim*. Quotation marks have been placed around these statements, and, where needed, small text edits have been placed in brackets (i.e., “[text edit]”) to smooth the statement for the reader. We have endeavored *not* to use cases where a note taker summarized a conversation point, e.g., “All participants said they would stay in the military.” In sum, our presentation strives to stay as close as possible to the comments and perspectives offered by the Service members who participated in each focus group discussion.

In addition, we were prepared to identify thematic areas where there were differences by Service or between enlisted personnel and officers, yet with only a few exceptions (as indicated herein), the issues do not appear to break out by these domains. We do point out such differences where they are salient and also suggest that the reader consult Chapter 4, which examines Service and pay grade differences among those who offered inbox comments.

Finally, the reader should bear in mind that we are not reporting numbers or percentages for any of these data. The intent of qualitative research is to not report percentages, but to understand the range of perspectives among the participants. Was there an issue for which no dissenting opinion was offered? If so, we report that. We also report issues for which there was a divergence of viewpoints: “A repeal of DADT will make X worse,” “Repeal will make X better,” “Repealing DADT will have no impact at all on X.” Our aim is to provide the reader with the diversity of opinions offered so that should DADT be repealed, the CRWG will know where implementation challenges lie, as well as what areas are strengths to be built upon going forward.

3.2 Individual Influencing Factors

In many instances, participants commented on various factors that might affect an individual’s reaction to working alongside a gay or lesbian Service member. We developed codes to reflect

commentary on how people's religious beliefs or personal values, the geographic region from which a person hailed, and his/her upbringing might affect how a person responded to repeal.

3.2.1 Religion/Morals/Values

Overall, Service members believed that religious beliefs and morality would play a role in the impact of the repeal. In addition to expressing their concerns for chaplains who might be uncomfortable, some participants said they would personally have difficulty serving with individuals whose lifestyles go against their own morals and religious beliefs:

- “We have a unit chaplain. Are we going to ask to change their belief system because of the repeal? Can you not talk about homosexuality?” (Enlisted)
- “I don’t care. The thing is the majority of Americans have religious beliefs. You can’t just tell them to stop it.” (Enlisted)
- “You are asking me to go against my religious beliefs. I’m not trying to fix him. [But you’ve] got an individual doing something morally wrong.” (Enlisted)

There were some differences between the comments made by officers and enlisted members regarding religious and moral beliefs. In some instances, officers spoke more generally about the problems their Service members would face when confronted with religious challenges, whereas the enlisted talked more about the issue from a personal perspective. The following example is illustrative:

- “The problem is dealing with people’s background or moral teachings and there are a percentage of Marines who have a religious basis for being against homosexuality, and you cannot ask or force people to go against something that have been taught.” (Officer)
- “For me personally, it’s morally wrong and socially unacceptable.” (Enlisted)

Some enlisted members mentioned how their personal beliefs would not interfere with their job. However, this was more commonly expressed by officers:

- “We all have personal opinions, but it is important to compartmentalize and keep upbringing and faith separate from what is logical and on the right side of history.” (Officer)

- “We hold our own moral beliefs outside our professional lives. If the Commander in Chief says this is the order, all my personal beliefs are suspended and I treat all Marines as Marines.” (Officer)

Aside from comments such as “hate the sin, love the sinner,” we found few instances of Service members saying their religious beliefs support homosexuality. Nevertheless, numerous respondents indicated that religious beliefs should have no role in whether or not gays and lesbians are fully integrated into the military, as illustrated by the following comments:

- “This in general leans towards the separation of Church and State. Regardless of my personal beliefs, this is a business.” (Officer)
- “People who have a problem with homosexuality it mostly comes down to the Bible. But we are a secular military.” (Enlisted)

3.2.2 Demographic/Regional Variations

Service members made similar comments about the impact of personal demographics in relation to the repeal. Some individuals further discussed how the impact will depend on the demographic makeup of the unit:

- “There are different issues at every base, every post. Here everyone has individual rooms. In most bases you are with roommates. Different places have different problems. [It] depends on where you’re at, who you’re living with.” (Enlisted)
- “We are the leaders. We have to deal with the homosexuals and the people who have an issue with it. There will be a demographic of officer who can’t deal.” (Officer)
- “... the impact on unit cohesion has a lot to do with the demographic make-up of the unit itself and also the living conditions. For example, if many members of the unit are conservative, then they are probably less accepting of the gay individual and there is a greater impact on cohesion.” (Officer)

Others commented on regional differences:

- “I grew up in WV, conventional, old school. And the guys I work with that I like, they’re from those kinds of places too. If someone said they were gay, at work, I would not want to be around them.” (Enlisted)
- “Depends on [the] post—Ft. Lewis is very accepting, but in the south, in the Bible Belt, it could potentially have a negative effect.” (Officer)

3.2.3 Stereotypes

Throughout the focus groups, individuals brought up various issues with the repeal of DADT. Sometimes, embedded in their comments and concerns were stereotypes of gays and lesbians. Many of the stereotypes revolved around feminine dress and grooming practices, with concerns commonly expressed about gay male Service members bringing “pink purses” to work. Some of the more serious stereotypes that came up during discussions were about individuals’ medical concerns. For example, individuals seemed nervous about catching STDs or HIV. Others had more general concerns about potential medical treatment of homosexuals:

- “I think homosexual sex leads to diseases. There’s always a chance to getting what someone has.” (Enlisted)
- “I think of the medical issues. The AIDS rate is running rampant in [the] gay community. When they go to medical will they be looked at different than a straight man? When you start looking at the statistics, they have more chance of getting an STD as well as other things. Doctors need to look at [them] differently from when I get checked. Another issue, when you fill out your form at the doctors they will need to ask ‘are you homosexual’ so they can look for different things.” (Enlisted)
- “If you are an infantry company in a fire fight, and you have an open homosexual who gets wounded, who is going to want to treat him for fear of HIV and other stuff?” (Officer)

One difference between officers and enlisted members is that many of the officers seemed to be aware of the presence of stereotypes and misconceptions about the homosexual community rather than openly expressing the stereotypes, as was more common during the enlisted focus group discussions. Many recommended education and training in that respect.

- “Ramp up awareness training within the unit. I would have all soldiers go through training (i.e., myths, stereotypes, sex identity, etc.). It needs to start during basic training and then up through each unit. There can’t be a lag in getting the education out there.”(Officer)
- “I hated Muslims after 9/11. When I went to Afghanistan, I saw them as human beings. It’s the same with sexual orientation. You’re going to have to educate people on this.”(Officer)

A few individuals among both officers and enlisted simply emphasized the importance of not stereotyping and being open-minded:

- “Just because they’re gay doesn’t mean that defines what kinds of interests they have.”(Enlisted)
- “Just because someone is gay doesn’t mean they’re going to be interested in you.”(Enlisted)
- “People act like it’s contagious when it’s not.” (Enlisted)

3.2.4 Upbringing

There were several common views that an individual’s upbringing might influence his or her reaction to repeal. The majority view was that many individuals would have a difficult time with repeal because it is different from how they were raised or what they are comfortable with:

- “Everyone has problems with situations they aren’t comfortable with. If you grow up with it, ok, if not then it might be a problem.” (Enlisted)
- “We grew up believing something and this goes against that.” (Enlisted)
- “The morals of the person will depend who is affected. In our generation, you are raised it is a man and woman. It will depend on your views.” (Officer)
- “18 years of growing up, doing something a certain way, being taught a certain thing is hard to change.” (Enlisted)

There was also a recurring theme that the younger generations would have an easier time adjusting because their upbringing is more accepting and open than the older generations.

- “Younger generations are more open. It’s more of the younger generation’s decision.” (Enlisted)
- “The younger generation will be okay.” (Enlisted)
- “There are kids in society who accept this type of thing now. It is not like when we were kids. They don’t have a problem with them [gay people].” (Officer)
- “You are talking to a generation of officers that do not think the same way as young soldiers. Senior officers and NCOs are not comfortable with them, not the way they were raised; it is not Judeo-Christian.” (Officer)

- “Kids growing up now, it is not a big deal. In this room the average age is 30. The values most of us were raised with are different. You look at younger guys born in the 80s, some of these guys their tolerance level is different than mine is.” (Enlisted)
- “Society today has more and more gays; in today’s society kids are more open to have sex at a younger age and experiment with sexuality; the younger soldiers are going to be just fine; the older soldiers are going to have the harder issues.” (Officer)

On the other hand, some individuals believe that the younger members will have a more difficult time accepting repeal:

- “It’s the way you’re raised; you’re not going to change. Older folks working with [the soldier will think it’s] no big deal. Younger ones will have problems.” (Enlisted)
- “Thinking about an 18/19 year old kid, this could be against his whole thought process, so it will be tough for him.” (Officer)

In general, the comments were consistent. The consensus was that those individual differences in beliefs and values will determine how the repeal will impact each person.

3.3 General Impacts of Repeal

The codes for this section include those issues raised by participants that dealt with the military experience, but were not directly covered in the “Unit Cohesion” section of the Small Focus Group Script. These include the widely shared belief that repeal is a “distraction” from more pressing military concerns, how they believed the military overall will respond to repeal should it occur, how DADT and its potential repeal fit with the military image and widely-cherished military values, as well as thoughts about the fact that many Service members are already serving alongside gays and lesbians. The specific content of each coding category is described in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2. General Impacts Coding Scheme

Overall Impact – This code was used for non-specific comments, e.g., “Repeal won’t affect us at all.”
Distraction – This was applied to comments that suggested repeal would take the military’s focus off of other issues, such as the wars or financial challenges.
Impact Will Vary Over Time – Numerous participants suggested that there will be a temporal component to how the military handles repeal, e.g., initial resistance/shock, which will be followed by gradual acceptance.
Individual – Participants did not always talk about “the gays and lesbians” or “the military.” Many recognized that populations are made up of individuals with unique characteristics and behaviors. This code was used when a participant said the impact will depend on individual characteristics of gay/lesbian Service members or the individuals who make up the unit.
Image of Military – Some focus group participants discussed the potential for repeal in terms of how the force would look to others, e.g., “we would look weak,” or “we would look like a non-discriminatory organization.”
Military Values – There were numerous comments regarding the repeal and its relationship to what the speaker believed to be the core beliefs and values promoted by the military, e.g., perception that repeal would indicate a loss of conservative values.
Current Presence Of Gays and Lesbians – While some participants expressed the belief that the military had no gays and lesbians in it, most recognized that they were already working alongside individuals they believed—or even knew—to be gay or lesbian. This high-level code was used for general statements of, “We’re working with them already.” ▪ Some took that knowledge to their next logical step. In some cases, they said, “We’re working with them already, so that’s a good reason not to repeal DADT.” There were two lines of argument as to why a current presence suggested a repeal not take place: - o <i>Suspecting is preferable to knowing</i> - o <i>DADT is preferable for gays/lesbians (“it protects them”)</i> ▪ The counter argument was, “We’re working with them already, so why not repeal the law? <i>It’s no big deal.</i>”

Potential for Openness – All participants recognized that a repeal of DADT would mean that gay and lesbian Service members *could* reveal their sexual orientation to others. There were various interpretations of what this potential would mean:

- **Overtness** – Concerns were often expressed that repeal would lead to “flamboyant” behavior by gays and lesbians, including gay pride parades, cross-dressing, and attempts to “push” their lifestyle on others.
- **Honesty, honor, authenticity** – Others talked about how repeal would allow gay Service members to be honest about their lives.
- **Discretion/ decisions about disclosure** – Still others argued that repeal would not “open the floodgates,” but that gay Service members would continue to assess the circumstances before disclosing their sexual orientation.
- **Ability to serve country freely** – Finally, a few participants stated that repeal would allow gays and lesbians to serve their country without worrying about losing their jobs.

3.3.1 Overall Impact

Comments on the perceived overall impact of a repeal of DADT suggested a variety of opinions. A few participants said the impact would be positive overall:

- “In the long run it will have a positive impact. It is their choice whether they want to disclose or not.” (Officer)
- “Before DADT people were persecuted, it was alleviated because now people couldn’t ask, so they weren’t persecuted blatantly. I think it would be better. Until we make this adjustment, they will be subject to some persecution.” (Officer)
- “Repeal would have a positive impact on others. ...gay and lesbian soldiers just want to put their partner’s picture on their desk, or bring spouse with them.” (Enlisted)

Many suggested that, on balance, the impact would be negligible:

- “Everyone kind of knows if someone is gay. There is no impact on effectiveness.” (Enlisted)
- “If it’s not imposed on you, why is it an issue?” (Enlisted)
- “Unless it was an entire brigade, then it won’t be that dramatic and it won’t affect readiness. Every unit has a guy that says he can’t do it. In those cases you say to the guy, ‘You do what you do, we are going to serve our country.’” (Enlisted)
- “I joined to protect my nation and that is not going to change, no matter who is standing on your left and right; it can’t be a narrow view of repealing.” (Officer)

But numerous participants expressed the belief that a repeal of the law would result in a negative impact:

- “It will destroy everything. They’ll use it to get away with everything.” (Enlisted)
- “The change will bring turmoil.” (Officer)
- “Maybe other soldiers do not have the guts to say it, but this is a bad idea. The repeal of DADT will make it a girly organization. Make people get out. We will be made fun of. It will have an impact.” (Officer)
- “I am a firm believer that this is going to destroy the military; the ones who want to make this change the most are the ones who want to push it to the forefront for their own gain; they will never be good soldiers anyway.” (Officer)
- “A small part of the military will come out and affect the entire military. Good order and discipline will be affected by this.” (Enlisted)

3.3.2 Distraction

A common theme was that repealing DADT would amount to an unwelcome “distraction” for the military. References were to the fact that our nation is at war, and financial resources are extremely tight:

- “The immediate impact on readiness is the major issue. I heard policy makers say embrace or walk—do you think there is an impact on readiness if a Major General leaves over this? You think this won’t affect readiness? Have you looked at impact on who would leave among officer ranks as we fight two wars?” (Officer)
- “Repealing DADT will be a huge amount of money. We already have Diversity Month every month when I don’t [even] have gas in my chopper because of sensitivity training.” (Officer)
- “In this time of war, it will be an undoing. Last thing I need is money towards homosexual training coming from my mission training.” (Officer)
- “Our already tight budget is now going to have to go to new housing? How are we going to pay for that?” (Enlisted)
- “My opinions are based on freedom of religion and according to mine, ... a man should not be with another man... There are a large number of people that share this belief. I know plenty of people would get out; it would cost a lot of money.” (Enlisted)
- “It’s about money. We’re running two wars at a time.” (Officer)

3.3.3 Impact Will Vary Over Time

Numerous participants felt there would be a negative overall impact on the military, although most said that that impact would decrease over time. A very few thought it would take many years—decades, even, for the impact to be mitigated:

- “It’s going to take years, and there is going to be violence, there are going to be places where there will be large scale violence.” (Officer)
- “A new person might not want to deal with ‘those people.’ The first 5 years of repeal there will be all kinds of problems and issues. Who would want to go into military in shambles?” (Enlisted)
- “Any time there is a prejudice it takes generations to disappear. Some people will have issues, but as long as they [gays and lesbians] are professional then it doesn’t matter.” (Enlisted)
- “There will be an acculturation process. With African Americans, it took 40 years before the last black unit was disbanded.” (Enlisted)

Others suggested that it may take a few years, but that the end result would be a stronger military:

- “It’ll take a few years but once the guys with the strong opinions go, we’ll adapt.” (Enlisted)
- “[A] short-term rift will happen but those who enlist will be in a more tolerant military.” (Enlisted)

Most participants, however, suggested that there will be a brief adjustment period, and then the forces will “move on.” In the focus groups analyzed for this report, this “brief adjustment” perspective appeared to be the most widely shared:

- “It will be relatively short-lived.” (Officer)
- “As we work together, I think it will flatten out and become more manageable and understanding. There will always be Rednecks and Blacks not liking Whites, but more and more people will not care.” (Officer)
- “Initially, having a superior who is gay or lesbian might be weird, but after a while it is ok.” (Enlisted)

- “They think it will be an issue, but it will be a norm in the soon to near future. There will be problems and we’ll get through it. Then it will become not an everyday issue.” (Enlisted)

3.3.4 Image of the Military

Some participants expressed their views about how repeal would affect other countries’ views of the United States military. A few said that the world would welcome a strong military showing diversity and tolerance, as illustrated by the following comments:

- “With regard to the rest of the world, we would look better in their eyes if this repeal is lifted. Other countries have already implemented similar lifts. It will improve foreign relations.” (Officer)
- “It will improve our standing with the public. They will think we are making progress.” (Enlisted)

Most of the focus group participants, however, said they thought the change would result in a negative perception of the United States military:

- “Have they looked at our enemy, the one we’re fighting now? This is one more recruiting tool they have to kill American soldiers. [There are] people who feel that homosexuality is punishable by death.” (Enlisted)
- “The image of the military is tarnished if this happens and goes through.” (Enlisted)
- “The most important image of the Army is the image our enemy has of the military. From the enemy point of view it may make us appear weak.” (Enlisted)
- “Currently we are at war with people who have extreme religious and cultural beliefs. We are now at the point where we are beginning to try to train Iraqis and Afghanis on military tactics and it is likely that they will not respect us...if we have homosexuals serving openly in the military...” (Enlisted)
- “We are a values-based group. People (in other countries) may question our values if the repeal were to occur.” (Officer)

3.3.5 Military Values

Many discussions revolved around the belief that the military has its own set of moral values, generally held to be more conservative than those of civilian society. Acceptance of homosexuality is

explicitly not one of those values; therefore, they said, a repeal of DADT would undermine what the institution stands for:

- “People view the military as the last bastion of morals and what is good. If we break that down here, what does it boil down to? What’s left?” (Enlisted)
- “I have values based on traditional family—husband wife kids home—and now you throw a 21st century way of living into something going on since 1775, it puts a twist into our way of life, our living. Homosexuality is not traditional.” (Enlisted)
- “We joined the military under one mindset and that is being changed on us; I’m losing respect for the institution I signed up for.” (Officer)
- “Belief systems are hardened in the Marines—I re-enlisted because I was afraid to be a civilian—there are things you might accept in the civilian world that you won’t accept in the Marines.” (Enlisted)

3.3.6 Current Presence of Gays and Lesbians in the Military

Focus group moderators asked participants to consider the idea that they might already be serving alongside gays and lesbians. Many commented about the fact that “gays and lesbians are already here” and, to these participants, integration of the forces was a non-issue:

- “There was always more than one gay or lesbian person. People knew it. It was never a big deal. They did things on their own time.”(Enlisted)
- “You kind of know that there are gay people already.” (Officer)
- “We’ve all worked with homosexuals, what’s changed? The standards are the same.”(Officer)

For some, however, the current presence of gays and lesbians meant that a repeal of DADT was unnecessary. One common refrain was, “DADT works.” Another version of the sentiment was, “If it’s not broken, why fix it?” Many participants said that the “not broken” part of the policy was that they were more comfortable suspecting someone was gay, rather than knowing for sure:

- “If you know for sure, it would freak people out more. There are rumors, but you never know. If it is out of sight it is out of mind, but once you know for sure that’s when people are freaked out.”(Enlisted)
- “Homosexuals can come in the office setting, there are hundreds of jobs. If they really want to be an infantry guy, they can keep it to themselves like they’re doing now, keep it to themselves.”(Enlisted)

- “I know they are there; we’ve had one kicked out of my unit. It is more the ‘ignorance is bliss’ thing.” (Enlisted)
- “You don’t ask you don’t tell, you come to work and do your job. It is not broke so don’t fix it.” (Enlisted)
- “DADT works. The repeal is not needed.”(Officer)
- “It is easier to live with speculation than confirmation.”(Officer)
- “Doesn’t DADT work, doesn’t it make sense? They can serve; just keep it to yourself.”(Officer)

Although the team developed a code to reflect comments that the law should not be repealed because DADT “protects gay people” and/or “they prefer it this way,” in the focus groups that perspective was rarely expressed. The following is perhaps the most coherent example of how this was discussed:

- “I’m not sure why they have to change it now. Things have been running smooth, so why does it have to happen now? There are several people [who I] think are gay in the Navy. They seem alright and happy, life is going good for them, they have fun and now it has to be brought up.”(Enlisted)

The flip side of “they’re here now” with respect to DADT was “why not repeal the law?” Fewer participants in this set of groups expressed this point of view, but many of those who did said they believed repeal would make life easier for gay and lesbian Service members:

- “The media will make a big deal (out of DADT repeal), which is embarrassing to me. We all want fellow colleagues to be happy on the inside though. If my colleague to my left is gay, I am glad they do not have cloud over their head anymore.” (Officer)
- “Homosexuals have been discriminated for so long they would probably feel some relief.”(Officer)
- “Homosexuals would not have a fear of getting kicked out, losing their job.”(Enlisted)
- “They will be able to focus on their work because they do not have to worry about being put out [of the military]. They will not have to worry if someone saw them engaging in homosexual behavior.” (Enlisted)

3.3.7 Potential for Openness

Although the essence of a repeal of DADT is that gay and lesbian Service members would no longer be discharged for being gay, focus group participants were not asked this broad question. Instead, they were asked to consider the implications of having an “out” Service member in their unit.

3.3.7.1 Overtess/Flamboyance

Numerous participants, especially enlisted personnel, expressed the belief that a repeal of DADT would mean that gay Service members would become “flamboyant” about their sexual orientation. The extremes to which they envisioned such “overtess” are reflected in the following comments:

- “It would be weird at first, for example if a man came to work with a pink purse or something. If they were too flamboyant it might be weird if you’re not accustomed to it.” (Enlisted)
- “If there is a flamboyant homosexual, then that is difficult to live with and deal with. I’ve done it and it’s not easy.” (Enlisted)
- “Fishnet shirts, and nipple rings, I don’t want to hear about it, but I do all the time. It is a big off duty issue.” (Enlisted)
- “I think more homosexuals will come in or opt for the military because they can be flamboyantly open about it. There will be flaming homosexuals.” (Enlisted)
- “They should just sustain the standard, I don’t like flamboyant queers.” (Enlisted)
- “What if a guy wants to come in wearing eye shadow?” (Enlisted)
- “When they come out and get flamboyant, they’ll take to the extreme and cross dress, it’ll get ugly.” (Enlisted)
- “If there’s an extremely feminine or flaming flirtatious person, it’s the same thing. It will all affect the morale of the unit.” (Officer)
- “How far are we going to go with this whole gay thing? Am I supposed to celebrate gayness—do they get to wear a rainbow flag on their uniform? If that is the case, this uniform isn’t worth wearing.” (Officer)

3.3.7.2 Honesty/Authenticity

Other participants spoke about how repeal would allow Service members to be honest about their sexual orientation, although the impact of honesty was viewed through different lenses. Some thought that if they could be honest, gay Service members could relax and simply focus on doing their assigned jobs:

- “There’s a person in my unit that I know is gay, and their morale is adversely affected. They have to hide their partner and children they may have with their partner. As a supervisor, we’re concerned about the unit member’s morale.” (Enlisted)
- “They just don’t have to worry about hiding it.” (Enlisted)

Others, however, said they would feel betrayed if they had worked with someone for a long time and suddenly discovered that individual was gay:

- “If someone you’ve known and worked with comes out, it shakes the foundation of everything you’ve built, your friendship...” (Enlisted)
- “It is an issue of integrity. If a leader who has served in the Army for a long time comes out and says he is gay, he has been living a lie and I would lose respect because he lacks integrity.” (Enlisted)
- “Some people may feel lied to saying, ‘Wow for 5 years I’ve known you and now I’m feeling misled.’” (Officer)
- “If DADT does get repealed, how would they deal with integrity? They’ve been lying about it for clearance. He’s been in the Navy for 18 years and says he’s gay and has been lying for 18 years. How will they deal with that?” (Officer)

3.3.7.3 Discretion

Not everyone believed that a repeal of DADT would result in gay and lesbian Service members coming out to their peers. Many said they felt gays and lesbians currently serving would continue to decide under what circumstances they were safe to reveal their sexual orientation:

- “I think if it is lifted not a lot of members will come out. They are your coworkers and things will stay where they are. If we didn’t know you were gay by now, it is unlikely that you will tell us.” (Enlisted)
- “Most likely the repeal is going to make homosexuals keep quiet and not say anything. It will go on as it was.” (Enlisted)

- “A lot of homosexuals won’t come out. If they do, we will just accept it.” (Enlisted)
- “It’s not like we have homosexuals ready to come through the closet and say ‘Hey we’re out.’”(Officer)
- “There will not be a mass coming out. The fear of ‘If I tell someone about my sexuality I will lose my job’ will be gone, but that is the only real change for the homosexual person. The repeal removes the anxiety (or worry about being kicked out), but other than that not much will change.”(Officer)

3.3.7.4 Ability to Serve Freely

Finally, some participants indicated that repeal simply will allow those gays and lesbians who want to serve the opportunity to do so without worrying about losing their jobs because of their sexual orientation:

- “People are there to serve for the country. There will be more protection for homosexuals.” (Enlisted)
- “I think the biggest shift will be the lack of fear of being found out and kicked out.” (Enlisted)
- “How many of the Arabic translators did we lose? We’ll have an influx of people who want to serve their country.”(Officer)
- “[Repeal would be] positive for homosexuals. This is a big step for them because they won’t have to fight [to keep their jobs] anymore.” (Enlisted)
- “The positive is that there will be more people to get the job done. Gay and lesbian Service members would not be hiding it their entire career.” (Officer)

3.4 Impact on Military Life

In the previous two sections, we explored the individual factors focus group participants believed would affect any particular Service member’s response to repeal, as well as their views about the broad impacts they believed repeal might have on the military. There were often-expressed concerns about how having gay Service members would affect how other countries view the American fighting forces, as well as varying perceptions on the relationship between military values and homosexuality. Equally important was focus group participants’ comments on the fact that they are currently serving alongside gays and lesbians—they just may not know it.

Both of these sections provide important background information for understanding perhaps the most important series of focus group questions, specifically, how participants believed repeal would affect various aspects of military life. Critical topics included repeal’s perceived impact on unit cohesion, readiness, and effectiveness, as well as recruitment, retention, and recommendation of military service to others. Many of the codes for this section (see Table 3-3) reflect specific questions asked by focus group moderators; other codes (e.g., perceived potential for harassment) emerged from participant comments.

Table 3-3. Impact on Military Life Coding Scheme

Overall Cohesion – Statements were coded to “overall unit cohesion” if the speaker did not make a specific reference to either task or social cohesion, e.g., “Cohesion will not be affected by repeal.”
Task Cohesion – In early focus groups, participants were asked to define unit cohesion. Our analysis of their definitions revealed that there are two components to the construct—“task cohesion” represents the unit members’ ability to work together effectively as a group to accomplish the mission. Social Cohesion – The second component of unit cohesion is the social element, specifically, the unit members’ ability to get along with one another. ▪ Off-duty socializing – This code was used for those statements referring to participants’ views about socializing with gays and lesbians outside of the military setting. ▪ Harassment and assaults – Focus group participants expressed numerous concerns about a negative impact of repeal on social cohesion, namely, the potential for an increased rate of harassment and assaults. ○ <i>Straights harassing gays</i> – Many participants spoke about the potential for verbal abuse or even outright violence (including open discussions about the possibility of murder) against gay Service members. ○ <i>Gays harassing straights</i> – Numerous participants also expressed worries about the possibility that they would be targets of unwanted sexual advances from gay Service members, from perceived inappropriate looks or physical contacts all the way to sexual assault.
Privacy Concerns (e.g., housing, berthing/billeting, tenting, showers) – This code was used to tag all statements referencing privacy in housing or showers.
Chain of Command – The protocol explicitly asked participants about how they believed repeal would affect the chain of command. Responses, which were generally unremarkable, were coded to this category.
Integration of New Members – Participants were also asked to comment on the integration of a gay Service member into a new unit.
Staffing Issues – Although explicitly called out in later versions of the protocol, participants often commented on

specific jobs or areas where they believed gay and lesbian Service members could work without being a distraction for the unit and those where they felt there could be challenges. Specific areas mentioned by participants were included as codes.

- ***Infantry***
- ***Medical***
- ***Urinalysis monitoring***
- ***Supply***
- ***Administration***
- ***Band***

Recruitment – Participants were asked to speculate about how repeal would affect recruitment into the military.

Retention – Participants were also asked if repeal would affect their plans—or the plans of others—for remaining in the military. While most comments were that older Service members would leave because they would be uncomfortable with the gay lifestyle, a few suggested that young Service members might leave both because of their discomfort and their relative lack of maturity.

- ***Older Service members will leave***
- ***Younger Service members will leave***
- ***No more “playing the gay card” to get separated from service*** – Some participants suggested that under DADT, Service members—both gay and straight—would say they were gay to avoid certain responsibilities. Although we have two specific codes called out (below), the only one mentioned in this set of focus groups was the perception that Service members would “play the gay card” to avoid being deployed to combat.
 - *Prior to deployment*
 - *After receiving education/training*
- ***Gays and lesbians will stay*** – In some of the other data collection mechanisms, respondents suggested that the retention rates of gay and lesbian Service members might increase since they would no longer have to worry about hiding their personal lives in order to maintain their jobs. No comments to this effect were so coded in this set of focus groups.

Recommendations to Others – Focus group participants were also asked to comment on how repeal would affect their likelihood of recommending military service to others.

Access to Services for Military Personnel – Comments about the impact of repeal on various services—particularly mental health counseling and chaplain services—received this code.

Impact on Personal Effectiveness of Service Member – This code was developed from analysis of confidential dialog comments, where GLBU respondents said they felt they would be more effective Service members if DADT were repealed. No comments in this set of focus groups were so coded.

3.4.1 Overall Cohesion

In all focus groups, participants were asked to comment *not* on how they thought the repeal of DADT might affect unit cohesion, but rather, how unit cohesion would be affected by having a Service member in the unit whom everyone knew to be gay or lesbian. As with other areas, opinions were mixed, with some saying there would be a negative impact and others indicating there would be no change at all. Importantly, participants often broke overall unit cohesion into two elements—task cohesion (working together to get the job done) and social cohesion (getting along in informal situations). We address the findings for each of these sub-categories separately.

3.4.1.1 Task Cohesion

Numerous participants said they believed having a gay Service member in their unit would have no adverse effect on being able to get the job done:

- “I think it’s morally wrong but as long as the mission gets done and done right, I wouldn’t have a problem with it.” (Enlisted)
- “If your unit is tighter, you work better as a team. I’ve been in the infantry and the cohesion is very important for morale, but I don’t see it being that big of a problem for mission accomplishment.” (Enlisted)
- “What does it matter if they can do the job if you are gay or straight?” (Enlisted)
- “As a team or a corps, I am only as good as the rest of my team. Cohesion is the heart of the matter. Given a task, a homosexual and a heterosexual can probably accomplish it the same way, so it should not have too much of an effect on getting the task done.” (Officer)
- “All I care about is can you carry a gun, can you walk the post, as far as people in my unit.” (Officer)
- “It depends on the type of unit and what you’re doing. As long as the unit has trained together well to do their mission, they’re fine.” (Officer)

Others, however, believed that having a gay Service member in the unit would be disruptive to task cohesion:

- “I think my productivity will be affected by the atmosphere and sexual harassment.” (Enlisted)

- “In combat arms MOS I’m not sleeping, showering, or brushing my teeth next to him. What are his thoughts? I’m not gay I’m straight, and my task cohesion would go way down.” (Enlisted)
- “Unit cohesion will be affected in a bad way. Other things also affect [it], for example, if a Service member is caught stealing cars, you put your car keys away. Everything affects unit cohesion. If a guy betrays his wife I can’t trust him and it will affect unit and task cohesion.” (Enlisted)
- “If you can’t trust the guy on the left and right then it’s a problem. Everyone has secrets. The Army is a homophobic organization as a whole. If someone comes out and says something, then it can affect cohesion a lot. I have seen it affect a lot. A lot of people don’t want to be a guy’s battle buddy. He will become a leper, and won’t be well trained. Everyone will focus on him and lose focus on what they have to do. [They’ll be] afraid he will rape them in the shower or something dumb, which is bogus, but it becomes an issue. They think he can’t do his job because he is gay.”(Officer)
- “Deep in people’s minds, you’ll always have animosities, those deep-seated beliefs that can’t be removed by a law. Ninety-eight percent of the Marine Corps will have to change to facilitate the wishes of the 2%. The military is traditionally discriminatory and there are reasons for that. We don’t take people who are not physically capable; we don’t take people with certain offenses against society. We reserve the right to discriminate—if you want to develop an elite force, you have to discriminate. This ability helps us build the best fighting force. In my view, homosexuality is not compatible to military service.” (Officer)

A very few focus group participants suggested that repeal might result in *increased* unit cohesion because unit members could finally talk about the “elephant in the room.”

- “There are gay people in the military already. The wondering could have created tension. The not-knowing made it awkward. The not-knowing may have an effect on unit cohesion.” (Officer)
- “If the cat was out of the bag then people can relax. If it is about cohesiveness [repeal] could increase it. I think openness and individuality would be helped this change. People would have much more fun than they’re having now. It would be a blast.” (Enlisted)
- “It will increase unit cohesion. Asking someone to deny who they are is unrealistic. If that person was able to be more open about it, then we can be more accepting.” (Enlisted)

3.4.1.2 Social Cohesion

Participants were asked about the importance of off-duty socializing in terms of building cohesion. Many said that social interaction is an important means of building friendships and trust, all of which may carry over into the unit's ability to get the job done. For these individuals, having a gay Service member in the unit might negatively affect both social and task cohesion:

- “It will be difficult to relate to new members. You just can’t show them around. Can’t take them out to a bar. It is tough to relate on a one on one basis.” (Enlisted)
- “It will be detrimental to unit cohesion. They (the gay people) will be separated and will feel left out. Those who are openly gay will be excluded from social functions, such as barbeques. This, in turn, will result in people feeling bad, left-out or upset.” (Enlisted)
- “Personally, I do not want to surround myself (in a social setting) with someone whose lifestyle choices I do not agree. In a social setting I would segregate myself from a homosexual.” (Officer)

A large number of participants appeared to be of the opinion that off-duty social activities might not be greatly affected. In some cases, they said that unit members tend to segregate themselves off-duty anyway by their likes and dislikes. They did not believe that having a gay member would change that:

- “Everyone knows I like to shoot on the weekends. If a gay likes to shoot, they’ll be at the firing range on the weekends. That’s fine.” (Officer)
- “You hang out with your friends, and your co-workers. When you are off duty you get to learn about the person and create friendships.” (Enlisted)
- “The guy in my unit that was out-ed, we went to bars all the time as a platoon and everything. He was just one of the guys. There was no effect at all with the guy that I knew.” (Enlisted)
- “If the person is cool, I’d invite them.” (Officer)

3.4.2 Harassment

There were concerns expressed by numerous participants about the potential for harassment to increase if repeal occurs. Many said they believed that gays and lesbians would be subject to both verbal and physical abuse, with some suggesting that the “accidental” killing of a gay Service member was not out of the question:

- “There might be some hardcore homophobe go out and beat the crap out of them.” (Officer)
- “I have strong moral beliefs, but I don’t act on them. Some might and be sociopathic (sic) and cannot control themselves, and very bad things can happen.” (Officer)
- “Some will be flamboyant, they might get a beating.” (Officer)
- “If you have someone that has a bias, you may have cases where people get murdered or hurt.” (Officer)
- “They’ll get hazed, they’ll get their ass whooped. It’s gonna happen, it’s already happening down in Savannah. We’re alpha males. That’s what we do, and the minute something comes that detracts from what we do, we’re gonna act. Those corporals, they’re going to get drunk and they’ll see someone walking down p-way, passageway, they’ll get tagged. I won’t even say what’ll happen on a ship, it’s going to happen.” (Officer)
- “I’ll throw out an example—someone thinks the gay guy touched him on purpose, it does not affect things at the time, but later, back at the barracks, I guarantee he’s going to get his butt whooped.” (Officer)

Conversely, many participants expressed concern about being the target of sexual assault by gay Service members:

- “There needs to be protection on both sides. People get drunk and it’s a whole other thing. There’s the possibility of beating up gays, but there’s also the possibility of a gay guy making advances.” (Officer)
- “There are a lot of references to sexual assault vs. sexual harassment. We need to be aware of the non-physical harassment (e.g., looking at each other in the shower).” (Officer)
- “For me personally, if I talk to the individual and they touch me on the shoulder that would bother me.” (Officer)
- “I think the fear is that those individuals will feel it’s safe for them to act like they are homosexual. Or they feel people will be able to be pursued by the same sex and they don’t want that to happen.” (Officer)

Regardless of whether the harassment was straights on gays, or gays on straights, several Service members pointed out that there are rules and regulations to address such conduct:

- “If the reaction is a crime or harassment, then it needs to be dealt with criminally. If it is mumbling and grumbling, then people should talk to their chaplain or work it out at home. No one in the military supports every policy of the U.S. government and we

don't have to. It doesn't matter; at the end of the day, either you want to serve or you want to leave." (Officer)

- "It's the same standard; sexual advances regardless have the same consequences." (Officer)
- "Uphold the policy and standards we have and use them for our safety for all involved." (Officer)

3.4.3 Privacy

The one issue that appeared to be of most concern to participants was their personal privacy. These comments were not at all nuanced, but simply expressed participants' concerns about having separate sleeping quarters, changing areas, and showers if DADT were to be repealed. The following statements are illustrative of how these concerns were discussed:

- "I live in the barracks and I don't think that it would go over well in that kind of environment. [I'm] concerned about how people would treat that individual." (Officer)
- "In the privacy side of the thing, they'll have to make some changes to the current infrastructure, [for example] privacy stalls in the bathrooms." (Officer)
- "Before I came into this unit, an NCO told me about cases when they'd avoid taking a shower with a gay guy. We're talking about making the gay people comfortable but what about the straight people?" (Enlisted)
- "At deployment we shower with water bottles and this person being gay would be a huge issue during showering." (Enlisted)
- "If I have to sleep with someone (in a two man tent) who is gay and may have feelings for me, how is this situation different than making a female sleep with a man? I would not like it." (Enlisted)
- "You can't room (barracks) a gay and straight Marine together. I'm not saying paint the barracks pink, but you can't put folks in that position. It is bad enough with 4 Marines in a room and a Marine has a female friend over. If you add in same-sex stuff, it is going to be bad juju." (Enlisted)
- "[One] individual did not come out and discuss preference, but they made it known through [their] actions. During deployments, people would go out of their way not to share bathing facilities at same time. ... This individual was marginalized during deployment. The soldiers would talk to them, but they were not included in the group. [And] there were conscious efforts to avoid bathing." (Enlisted)

3.4.4 Staffing

Participants offered different opinions on whether or not gays and lesbians should be restricted from holding certain jobs. Some unequivocally said “no,” that no job should be off-limits because of a person’s sexual orientation:

- “It is not an ability issue, it will be a personality issue [if someone is restricted from a job]. Man, woman, straight, gay—if you can do the job, then [it’s] ok.” (Officer)
- “That defeats the whole purpose behind integration. ‘Yes, but you can’t do this’ defeats the whole theory behind it. Every job, every type of combat, front line, rear line...[they] need to make it equitable and fair. All or nothing.” (Officer)
- “[Restrictions] would be a bad thing....That’s something that Coasties are proud of, that all people can participate in all positions. (*‘I agree, I mean they’re not handicapped.’*) Right, they’re doing the job now.” (Officer)

And a few unequivocally agreed with restrictions, with some saying that gays shouldn’t be allowed anywhere:

- “They should not be allowed into any jobs. When you put your sexual preference out there, it takes away from the mission. I am opposed to having gays in military.” (Enlisted)
- “If the majority of their unit is uncomfortable then they should be prohibited from jobs in that unit, because it will have a detrimental effect on the unit. Is it right to have them project their values on the rest of the unit?” (Officer)

Most, however, said that only certain MOSs should be restricted, in particular, the infantry or any combat arms positions:

- “Combat arms, really. A lot of us are alpha males, it’s not right, but it’s gonna happen, they’re going to get picked on. I’d rather get picked on for being soft-spoken than gay. Fellows are going to get hurt.” (Enlisted)
- “Homosexuals should not serve in the infantry.” (Enlisted)
- “When females joined the Marine Corps they said we’ll never win a battle again. As long as they keep out of combat MOSs we’ll be ok, just like with the females.” (Enlisted)

Some focus group participants also expressed concern with having gay men in various medical fields:

- “I don’t want a guy that likes guys checking me out.” (Officer)
- “The doctor is cool. But, I don’t want him giving me an examination (because the doctor is gay). I want the option not to be looked at by them.” (Enlisted)
- “Who would be uncomfortable if you had to go to medical clinic where the guy examining you was gay? I would.” (Enlisted)

Many did offer that gays and lesbians could fill administrative positions without having a negative impact on the unit:

- “It wouldn’t be that serious in an administrative situation, the mission is going to be done regardless.” (Enlisted)
- “[It] wouldn’t matter in an administrative position.” (Enlisted)

3.4.5 Recruitment

Our analysis of how participants thought repeal might affect recruitment was unremarkable on at least two counts: First, because the vast majority of focus group participants were not recruiters themselves, their answers were speculative at best. Secondly, and perhaps because most participants were only able to guess at the impact, the perspectives appeared evenly divided between those who felt recruitment would be negatively affected (“There are plenty of young people who don’t want any part of it.”), those who anticipated a positive effect (“Recruitment will increase...There are homosexual patriots. Orientation has nothing to do with patriotism.”), and those who believed repeal would have no impact on the number of individuals who would join the military (“When people join the Army they have a certain set of ideas about why they’re joining, those won’t change.”). No additional insights were gleaned from the focus groups with regard to this issue.

3.4.6 Retention

3.4.6.1 General Impact

Participants were asked if repeal would affect their plans—or others' plans—for staying in the military. Some clearly thought that individuals would leave the military in response to repeal:

- “People might separate voluntarily. That’s going to be detrimental to the government. I do my job, I know they’re here, but some people like myself have a problem if they come out. You can’t question my morals, you can’t make me stay.” (Enlisted)
- “A big chunk if they had the option to cohabitate or get out of the army, then a lot of them will get out of the army. Retention will be an issue. ...They don’t like what is going on.” (Officer)

Others said they were going take a wait-and-see attitude, as illustrated by the following quote:

- “I’m not vested entirely, I’ll see how it pans out next 5 years.” (Enlisted)

And still others said that repeal would have little if any impact on retention plans; it would be counterbalanced by an upswing in new recruits.

- “It won’t be a big enough issue to make someone get out of the military. If you get out, there will be gay people there too. If you leave the military you won’t be escaping gay people.” (Enlisted)
- “The people that might think they’re going to leave because of this would be much, much less than people who would join. It would be a net gain.”(Officer)

As several participants noted throughout the various discussions, the economy may have a bigger impact on retention rates than the repeal of DADT.

3.4.6.2 Generational Effect

As suggested earlier, there were perceptions among the participants that age might be a factor in whether others planned to leave or not. Some felt that the older Service members would be unable to accept the culture change and would choose to leave:

- “I don’t know how many people would leave. I know someone left after 17 years of serving after the President made the announcement.” (Officer)
- “With the younger generation it may not be as big of a deal. The percentage is a lot higher with acceptance instead of 45 and older. The military population is conservative.”(Officer)
- “I know people who are going to drop papers because of this. I think there are going to be far more senior leaders (30+ years) who are going to leave.”(Enlisted)
- “A lot of people will retire. It might be that a few senior people will leave.”(Officer)
- “How many major leaders will leave? You cannot replace experience overnight. What about non-commissioned officers, the backbone of the military—if they leave over this, how do we deal with this? This could be a major blow to readiness.” (Officer)

To the contrary, a few thought that younger Service members might not be able to handle the change:

- “Other people, of lower rank, would not be as accepting of the repeal and may feel imposed upon. They may have the attitude of, ‘If I don’t really like what I see and this was not part of my contract, can I get out?’” (Officer)
- “There are plenty of young people who don’t want any part of it.”(Enlisted)
- “If I was a 1st or 2nd-term, and I got my benefits, [I might say], ‘I’m going to college.’” (Enlisted)
- “You’re going to see problems magnified on the cutters [with] the young people. The military attracts socially conservative people...you have a lot of young people who don’t know any better, going onto a ship with people from completely different backgrounds, there’s already going to be issues and this new one will just be adding to it.” (Officer)

3.4.6.3 “The Gay Card”

Finally, several participants indicated that as long as DADT remains in place, any military member—gay or straight—can “play the gay card” to get out of the Service. Some suggested that the card has

been played more lately in an effort to avoid deployment. Repeal would end that outlet, they said, and thereby increase retention generally, as illustrated by the following quote:

- “They won’t be able to get out because of their sexual orientation. They can’t use it as an excuse to not deploy.” (Enlisted)

3.4.7 Recommendations to Others

The vast majority of focus group participants indicated that repeal would have no impact on their recommendation of military service to others. The following comments illustrate this perspective:

- “I’m pushing a nephew to go into the military. DADT doesn’t weigh in.”(Family)
- “I would recommend this to anyone who is capable and wants to serve their country.” (Officer)
- “You’re still serving your country so it’s the right thing to do.” (Officer)
- “I have a child that is gay so I did not recommend the Service to him, but if they repeal the law I would have no problem recommending [it] to him.” (Enlisted)
- “Anybody who wants to serve should be given the opportunity to serve, it doesn’t matter their orientation. This country was based on diversity. You want to serve? Fine. If the person next to you doesn’t want to serve with you? That’s between you and them. To protect this nation, you should go for it; I’ll sign you up today.” (Enlisted)

Some participants were clear, however, that they would no longer recommend the service to others. In one focus group with E5s and E6s, the notes indicated that the consensus among the participants was they would not recommend the service to others if DADT were to be repealed. Comments from participants in other groups reflect this sentiment:

- “I would forbid my immediate family from joining.” (Officer)
- “I always preached Army, Army, Army—now I want to think about it.”(Enlisted)

3.4.8 Access to Services

Only a couple of participants commented on how repeal might affect Service members’ access to services. Nevertheless, we present their views in this chapter because, as the reader will see, the issue was discussed in similar terms in other qualitative data sources (e.g., family engagements).

Two individuals noted that if DADT were repealed, gay and lesbian Service members would be able to obtain counseling services from the military without fear of being discharged. One of these said that she had tried to counsel two young women whom she believed to be lesbian, but they couldn't discuss this aspect of their relationship:

- “Had they been able to talk about it may have helped. I asked what’s really going on? [But] I can’t get to the source. If [a] support system was in place maybe they could have reached out and sought the assistance that they need.” (Enlisted)

One individual thought that perhaps counseling to “change” homosexuals might be made available:

- “We offer programs for alcoholics that want to change. There is a body of literature that says homosexuals sometimes want to change. Would programs be available if they ever want to change? Is homosexuality categorized as a mental illness or not?” (Officer)

Finally, a couple of others were concerned about various impacts on the chaplaincy:

- “Chaplains are chosen by denominations, but if a chaplain admitted to being homosexual, it would have an impact on folks going to the chaplain and conducting a service of any kind. Then you are getting into what people believe and whether they will be used because they see their [chaplain’s] lifestyle [is] different from what they believe.” (Officer)
- “[You could have a] situation where a chaplain could be asked to give counseling. [But a] chaplain counsels based on religious faith. If you morally don’t believe in gay marriage, [they might not know] how to handle a situation that they should be helping.” (Officer)

3.5 Impact on Family Life

The small focus group script did not ask these participants specifically about how a repeal of DADT might affect their families; those questions were built into the Family Focus Group Script and their results will be reported in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, Service members often did indicate that they were not the only ones who would be affected by repeal; having gays and lesbians in the force was perceived as affecting their families as well. The codes for this area (shown in Table 3-4) reflect the issues specifically called out in the family focus group script, but still clearly capture those raised by Service members in their own focus group discussions.

Table 3-4. Impact on Family Life Coding Scheme

Overall – Participants sometimes expressed their beliefs that a repeal of DADT would affect their families. In many instances, no specific impacts were mentioned; instead, the speaker might make a general statement such as, “You need to think about the families, too.” This code was used for such statements.
Gay Families Living in Base Housing/Next Door – A common concern expressed by participants was that the military might recognize gay and lesbian relationships as valid and thereby open up base housing to same sex couples.
Effects on Children – Speakers frequently expressed concerns about how a repeal of DADT might affect their children. This top-level code was used for comments that generally mentioned an impact on the speaker's children. More specific issues raised by participants were as follows: ▪ Values – Speakers often said the gay lifestyle is inconsistent with the values they are trying to teach their children. ▪ Exposure to lifestyle – Some participants simply said they did not want their children exposed to gay people and their lifestyle. ▪ Danger (perception of gays as pedophiles) – Although we also coded these comments to “stereotypes,” one individual in this set of focus groups confounded being gay with pedophilia.
“Etiquette”/Concerns Relative to Social Events – A few participants asked questions or expressed concerns about how their own families would relate to gay families if they attended the same social events.
Participation in Family Readiness Groups – Some participants wondered how Family Readiness Groups would be affected if gay partners and their children were allowed to participate in these groups.
Chaplaincy Services – Participants commonly spoke about a potential impact of the repeal on the availability of chaplain services.
Impact on Personal Relationships – This code was added to our comprehensive coding scheme from GLBQ chat room interactions, in which the respondent said repeal would take the stress off of their personal relationship because that relationship could be acknowledged to others. Although some participants <i>implied</i> an impact, there were no comments in this set of focus groups that were so coded.

3.5.1 Overall

As suggested in the table above, participants often referenced their families when they expressed an opinion about a potential repeal of DADT. Some of the comments were not very specific, but nonetheless reflect the realization that in the military, home and work are intertwined:

- “Family interaction will be affected, it will cause problems.” (Enlisted)
- “I don’t care about a person’s sexuality and it has no impact on my home.” (Enlisted)
- “There is a lot that the military does for the families and you can’t come up short because someone is gay.” (Enlisted)
- “On family days we have to come to work to meet people and hang out. How are they going to do it?” (Enlisted)
- “Some people are going to drop their papers because it’s just another level of stress where you don’t want to involve your family.” (Enlisted)

3.5.2 Gay Families in Base Housing

Although discussion leaders had made it clear that because of DOMA the military would be limited in the benefits it could extend to gay and lesbian military members, participants frequently expressed concerns about repeal’s impact on base housing and their having to live next door to a gay couple. They often phrased their concerns about how that living situation would affect their children:

- “I’m raising my family and brought up devout Catholics. Now all of a sudden Adam and Steve move in next door. I have to deal with that earlier, now with my kid.”(Officer)
- “What about families? My Judeo-Christian family, do we want to live next to a family with different values? Do I want my children to see that? We are now passing that burden off on soldiers.”(Officer)
- “The big problem you will run into is for things like housing and families—that is a huge change.” (Enlisted)

3.5.3 Effects on Children

Beyond the perceived potential for having gay neighbors on base, participants indicated more generally their concerns about having gays and lesbians around their children. As indicated in our coding scheme (see Table 3-4 above), many were worried about how a repeal would clash with the kinds of values they are trying to teach their children. In particular, they spoke about “exposing” their children to the gay lifestyle. One participant thought some parents might not want their children socializing with children from gay families because, “Families may say I don’t want you to think that’s the way it should be.” Other comments suggested that “exposure” and “values” were often seen to go hand-in-hand:

- “I want my daughter to be tolerant but I want her values to be similar to mine.” (Enlisted)
- “The informal practice of inviting a homosexual to my house won’t happen. I don’t want them around my children. My children’s grandmother is now homosexual. They see her but never sleep over her house.” (Enlisted)
- “I don’t want to expose my kids to that.” (Officer)
- “How can you attend a family meeting and have two guys holding hands there? What do you tell your kids?” (Officer)
- “I won’t raise my kids in a neighborhood with a gay family.” (Officer)
- “If I knew a Marine was gay, I’m not sure I would invite them in and expose my children to that, and there goes another opportunity to have unit cohesion.” (Enlisted)

3.5.4 Etiquette/Social Events

Participants said that if gay and lesbian Service members had the opportunity to be open about their lives, then they might bring their partners to both formal and informal social events. Although some were nonplussed about that possibility, particularly with regard to informal events, some concern was expressed about how other attendees might handle seeing a gay couple in a more formal setting:

- “The homosexuals will be included on family day. If I have people over at my house, I get to invite who I’m comfortable with. If I’m not friends with them, they don’t come or I ask the person not to bring their partner.” (Officer)

- “The formal events are a different issue though. At a military ball, I don’t want to see it or even when you come home from deployment and you are all over your partner.” (Enlisted)
- “When it comes to social events, I think of the Marine Corps Ball, I bring my wife. When they repeal, can they bring their partner? And my wife is sitting there, she’s tolerant, but will she be disgusted and want to leave?” (Enlisted)
- “You are at the Ball. How are you going to deal with two guys slow dancing together? This will roll over into the workplace. Someone sees two women dancing together. It is not uncommon to see two women dancing together. That is not an uncommon thing. It is socially acceptable. But, when I see two guys rubbing belt buckles, it will bother me.” (Enlisted)

3.5.5 Participation in Family Readiness Groups

We present more findings about the impact of a potential repeal of DADT on family readiness groups and other family-focused events in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, the issue was raised independently in few of the Service member small focus groups in this current dataset, with all noted comments suggesting a negative impact:

- “I won’t go to a... family readiness group if a gay Service member comes with a same sex partner. I would not attend a unit function or ball either.” (Enlisted)
- “What about family support groups? Where do you draw the line? If they aren’t protected, where do you draw the line? [It] won’t work to include them in this.” (Officer)
- “Some of the things to strengthen relationships between husbands and wives may be called into jeopardy. Marriage retreats, for example, are paid for with federal and taxpayer money. [Will gays say], ‘They did not let me and my partner attend this marriage retreat?’ ...The overwhelming majority of the Army are Christian and ... all of a sudden [they] are being asked to accept a situation, a behavior, and a lifestyle that goes against what they believe spirituality. Will that funding for marriage retreats, which keeps couples strong, will [that] funding be pulled [if gays are excluded]?” (Officer)

3.5.6 Chaplaincy

Several participants asked how a repeal of DADT might affect the chaplain corps. In large measure, the comments reflect a concern about how religious leaders whose faiths do not support homosexuality will handle the issue. The following are two examples of such comments:

- “Are chaplains going to be forced to marry gay couples?” (Officer)
- “The chaplains, they may require a little special education. Their job is to come from their spiritual belief system. That’s another piece that I’d like added to the implementation. How are we going to take care of the Chaplains and make sure that they’re on board?” (Officer)

3.6 Contextual Issues

Many participants viewed the potential repeal of DADT in terms of larger contextual issues, e.g., political factors driving the push for repeal, how integration of gay and lesbian Service members compared to previous integration efforts in the military, and the like. The team developed a set of codes (see Table 3-5 and descriptions below) to reflect these broad, contextual concerns.

Table 3-5. Contextual Factors Coding Scheme

Timing – This category includes comments on the timing of the repeal. Comments reflected two trains of thought, as indicated in the following codes: ▪ <i>“Why now? We’re not ready.”</i> ▪ <i>“Why not now? It’s about time.”</i>
Politics – This is a broad category that includes all comments related to political factors that were perceived to be driving the push for a repeal of DADT.
Legal And Constitutional Issues – This category includes all comments related to legal issues, both domestic as well as foreign. Domestic issues tended to reference state policies around gay marriage; comments about international law often were in reference to local laws (particularly in Muslim countries) where homosexuality is a crime, and the potential complications in deploying gay Service members to these environments. In addition, we included commentary about civil rights concerns under this “legal” category. ▪ <i>Laws of U.S./gay marriage/ Defense Of Marriage Act (DOMA)</i> ▪ <i>Laws of other countries (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan)</i> ▪ <i>Civil rights/ Free speech</i>

Relationship To Non-Military Community – This category was drawn from a later version of the small focus group script that was used primarily in OCONUS settings. In this version of the script, focus group participants were asked about the potential impact of repeal on the military's relationship with the local, non-military community. This question was not asked of participants in all of the locations reflected in the current data therefore we do not address it in this report.

Social Experiment – This code was used when participants suggested that a repeal of DADT amounted to the military being used as an experiment for the social integration of gays and lesbians. As indicated later in this chapter, "social experiment" is the exact language used by many of the participants. Two additional codes were created under this one: One to reflect those comments that this is an unwanted experiment; and one to reflect those comments indicating that the military has often been the testing ground—and the leader—for civilian society.

- *Unwanted, e.g., military shouldn't have to deal with something civilian society hasn't figured out yet*
- *Military can lead the way for civilian society*

Comparisons To Previous Military Integration Efforts (African Americans, women) – Numerous participants referenced the integration into the military of African Americans and women when talking about the repeal of DADT. As indicated by the codes below, some felt that the situations were similar, while others explicitly stated that it is inappropriate to draw such parallels.

- *Parallel/analogous to previous efforts, e.g., it's the same*
- *Different from previous efforts, e.g., being gay is a choice (unlike race or sex)*

Comparison To Foreign Militaries – This code was used for references to foreign militaries that have integrated gays and lesbians into their forces.

3.6.1 Timing

In several groups participants commented on the timing of the repeal. Almost uniformly, the participants suggested that the timing is wrong, particularly with the United States in the middle of two wars:

- "Right now we are fronting two wars and numbers is important. Why take on this issue now?" (Enlisted)
- "The bottom line is the timing is wrong. We're getting ready for another surge in Afghanistan, and it's not the right time." (Enlisted)
- "I think there are times and places for everything. This is not that time when we are in two wars and money is an issue." (Officer)

Yet others suggested that this was as good a time as any for the repeal, citing the general move towards acceptance in general society:

- “I’m not sure I’m buying all the immorality and all these arguments; hey, that’s what society is doing. If you don’t like it, what are you going to do, drop out of society? That is the way the U.S. is right now—we are tolerant as a society. And, we are part of the society like it or not.” (Officer)
- “British soldiers have already integrated. Other major armies around the world have already integrated and allowed them to serve openly. Studies are being done that show that it increases unit cohesion ultimately, people no longer feel like they have to be closeted and can share full aspects of their lives. Somebody likened it to having a black president. ‘The country is not ready, we can’t have a black president.’ Before you know it, we have a black president and the world hasn’t stopped. The Army will move on and we will move past this.” (Officer)

3.6.2 Political Motivation

In numerous focus groups, participants indicated a belief that the reason there was a push to repeal DADT was not out of consideration for the military, but rather the needs of the politicians in Washington, DC. The issue was discussed in similar terms across participants, regardless of their military rank. Below are some examples of how this concern was raised:

- “The DADT policy is dumb for the money we are spending when you know it’s going to happen. Congress is going to pass it. It’s a Democratic issue that will be voted by what their constituents want, so it will pass.” (Enlisted)
- “This isn’t about the military, this is politics.” (Enlisted)
- “I personally feel this is another political decision thrust upon us. It has nothing to do with soldiers. It is a forced integration that we have to deal with. Congress has already written it in law.” (Officer)

3.6.3 Legal and Constitutional Issues

3.6.3.1 Same Sex Partners and Benefits

At the beginning of each IEF, the discussion leaders clearly stated that a potential repeal of DADT is not the same thing as a repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). The repeal, they reiterated, would mean that gay Service members would not be discharged simply for being gay; that

said, as long as DOMA remains in effect, the partners of gay and lesbian Service members would not be eligible for the full array of spousal benefits, such as access to on-base housing.

The disclaimer notwithstanding, the issue of DOMA and spousal recognition came up repeatedly during the focus group discussions. Some participants simply questioned how the military would handle the benefits issue, given that same sex couples can be legally married in some states:

- “Another argument you need to look at is benefits. Me, being a single E4, I cannot get housing with my girlfriend. But a gay couple that wants to get housing, how would the military deal with this? How would they support gay marriage without the backing of the Nation (there are many states that do not support gay marriage).” (Enlisted)
- “From an administrative perspective, for the states that accept gay marriage, will the military allow homosexuals on-base housing for those that are considered married by that state? The military will have to offer the same benefits to everyone I would assume.” (Officer)
- “Will their partners have access to BAH Civil Union benefits? As they mentioned the other day there’s only certain states where it’s recognized.” (Enlisted)

Other participants took a different tack, not asking, but saying explicitly that the military will have to recognize same-sex marriages:

- “Who are we to say you can marry a foreign national, but if you marry a U.S. citizen they can’t get benefits because they are gay?” (Enlisted)
- “In the military you move all the time. If you are recognized in one state, but stationed elsewhere now you are no longer recognized when you are moved. You can’t take that away.” (Officer)
- “I know marriage isn’t legalized in a lot of states. What are they going to do about it? Have families in restricted areas? If they don’t care about any family members or loved ones, then there is an issue.” (Enlisted)
- “In the states that allow gay marriage, if a gay person is stationed there, what does that mean? This is a national issue. As a nation we have to make that decision.” (Enlisted)

3.6.3.2 Civil Rights

Finally, the issue of civil rights was raised by several participants. Some of the heterosexual soldiers felt that if DADT were repealed, their civil rights would be violated:

- “You would have to build up the rights of each party, straight and gay as far as being uncomfortable. Am I allowed to say I’m uncomfortable? Whose rights are going to be protected?” (Enlisted)

Others stated their beliefs that DADT constitutes a violation of gay and lesbian Service members’ civil rights, and that repeal will have to be instituted from the top, down as illustrated by the following comment with respect to DADT:

- “Every civil rights issue in this country hasn’t been decided by the people. The end of segregation wasn’t because we left it up to the people. Allowing women to vote, entering military schools—that was all mandated.” (Officer)

3.6.4 Social Experiment

In line with their concerns about a political driver being behind repeal, numerous participants said they felt like civilian society was using the military as a “test bed” or “guinea pig” for an issue that has yet to settle out in the civilian world. Participants often referred to the repeal as a “social experiment.” The following examples were drawn from three entirely different focus groups:

- “We will be using the military as a social experiment for society.” (Officer)
- “The military shouldn’t be a testing ground for social experiments.” (Enlisted)
- “We shouldn’t be subject to Congress’s social experiments.” (Enlisted)

Many resented being the test case, as evidenced by the following comments:

- “You are going to use this [gays in the military] to change the way the whole country thinks about legalizing it. Why should I have to be subject to showering with someone [who is gay]?” (Officer)
- “The nation has not come out to say this is official. Now they (nation) are asking the army to do it without them doing it first.” (Enlisted)

Not everyone agreed, however, with some suggesting that the military needs to keep up with changes in the civilian world, as illustrated by the following comment from an Officer:

- “Step back and look at society now, when you go out into the public. [If you think] it is not happening now you are fooling yourself! ... It will be the law. Deal with it or get out.” (Officer)

3.6.5 Comparisons with Previous Integration Efforts

Participants in numerous groups expanded on the “social experiment” theme, drawing comparisons with previous efforts in the military to integrate both African Americans and women. Many believed that the integration of gays and lesbians was on the same order as these previous efforts and suggested that although it might be difficult at first, “We’ll adjust”:

- “Women weren’t thought to be strong enough; we got over all of it. I think we will get over sexuality.” (Enlisted)
- “We had the same condition when race was an issue. We should be above normal society. I’m in training so I can see how it would be a problem in certain fields, but it has to be tolerated.” (Enlisted)
- “This is not the first time we have had to tackle this issue. It was done before with two other groups of people; there were issues and problems that had to be overcome. This has happened before and will likely happen again. We have a blueprint on how to handle it—we handled it before, we’ll handle it again.” (Officer)
- “It’s going to take time to get used to it. It took time to get used to women, African Americans. Any time there is a prejudice it takes generations to disappear. Some people will have issues, but as long as they are professional then it doesn’t matter.” (Officer)

Others drew on the same historical efforts, but said explicitly that integration of gays and lesbians was *not* the same as previous efforts. In most instances, their argument drew on distinctions between heredity and choice, with homosexuality perceived as the latter:

- “The military showed leadership with race and women in hindsight. [But] this is a decision behavior to the vast majority. People believe it is a decision people make (to be gay or lesbian). You are making me have to accept something I don’t accept.” (Officer)
- “Homosexuality is a choice; you cannot choose your race.” (Officer)
- “A lot of people try to compare to race and gender. They are miles apart. You have no choice. I am a female, male, African-American. This is a whole different concept, a sexual preference, and a behavior.” (Enlisted)

3.6.6 Comparison with Foreign Militaries

Analysis of comments making comparisons with foreign militaries that have integrated gays and lesbians into their forces were not especially robust or informative. Participants’ views went in either

of two directions: Some stated that the United States should look to those countries for lessons in how to handle this stateside; others, however, said the comparison is unfair, either because they felt the United States has a stronger global military obligation than other countries or because American culture is “more conservative” than that of our European Allies.

3.7 Implementation

Participants were asked a few variations on the question, “What can the military do to ensure that if DADT is repealed, the organization continues to function smoothly?” Many groups were unable to come up with specific answers to that question; nevertheless, throughout the course of each discussion, suggestions were made. Our coding scheme for these is set forth in Table 3-6 below.

Table 3-6. Implementation Coding Scheme

Policies and Guidelines ▪ Clear Written and Enforced Policies/Guidelines – This code was used for statements in which the speaker simply indicated that policies should be unambiguous and consistently enforced by leaders. ▪ Revision to Specific Policies/Guidelines – Participants often called out specific policies they believed would need to be revised if DADT were repealed, as follows: ○ <i>Discrimination and Equal Opportunity complaints</i> ○ <i>UCMJ, e.g., Article 125 (sodomy)</i> ○ <i>State-based National Guard/Reserve policies, e.g., Title 32</i> ○ <i>Grooming/hygiene/dress</i> ○ <i>Fraternization</i> ○ <i>Rules pertaining to sexual conduct, e.g., liberty buddies, open doors in barracks housing</i> ○ <i>Housing, berthing/billeting, showers</i> ○ <i>Conscientious objector model</i> ○ <i>Reinstatement of previously discharged gay/lesbian Service members</i> ○ <i>Benefits for partners of gay/lesbian Service members</i>
Leadership/Role Models – This code was used for those statements in which the speaker stated that strong leadership would be needed to ensure smooth implementation of repeal.
Process of Implementation – This is the overarching code for several specific implementation procedures suggested by the participants. ▪ Careful Planning – In essence, “don’t repeal until you have a plan in place.” ▪ Phase-in Approach – Several participants said they felt the military should integrate gays and lesbians in stepwise fashion, i.e., not integrating all Service branches at the same time. ▪ Education/Training – Participants often spoke about the need for education and training to ensure smooth implementation. Statements rejecting the need for additional training were also tagged with this code.

3.7.1 Strong Leadership and Clear Policies and Guidelines

We begin this section with participants' views on leadership and the need for clear policies and guidelines. Not surprisingly, these two constructs emerged in only a few of the junior enlisted focus groups, but did appear in all of the focus groups with senior enlisted personnel and commissioned officers. Consistently, participants focused on the need for strong leaders who would put any new policies into action and, as importantly, who would lead their troops by setting a positive example.

A careful review of the focus group notes helped explain why these two areas would be so frequently mentioned: First, participants clearly articulated that everyone has his or her own beliefs and values; however, when one joins the military, they said, personal values must yield to military policy, at least in those situations where the person is acting in an official capacity:

- “If DADT is repealed, us as leaders must treat everyone equal. Outside of the uniform, I don’t have to have them over at my house. I can exclude those that are openly homosexuals.”(Enlisted)
- “I can’t pick and choose what I enforce; I have strong religious beliefs but I have to leave them behind and do my job; if I can’t do that, I’ve got to leave the Army.” (Officer)
- “A leader only paying lip service will find himself out of a job. Soldiers follow orders. If he doesn’t get it, he’s going to realize he has a short career in the military.”(Enlisted)
- “Leadership of every military is encouraged not to discuss political views. We have our views, but we keep it secret. If it gets out it doesn’t matter, but we try to keep it to ourselves and that’s how we should handle policy changes in the repeal.” (Officer)
- “Leaders should follow moral conviction within the law. You have to tell them to separate work and personal, moral or religious beliefs.” (Officer)
- “As a leader, you are going to lead people from all people and all cultures; you can’t separate people and call yourself a leader. If that one little issue bothers you so much, salute the flag and move on to your next career.” (Officer)

In addition, commanders “set the tone” for the rest of the unit, demonstrating to their subordinates exactly how the military expects its Service members to behave. Numerous participants talked about the importance of “leading by example:”

- “I think we should have all-hands calls with the commanding officer and let them speak. It should roll down from there. Senior officers will do what they are told and so will the NCOs. I’ll meet with all my commanders and let them know what is going on to ensure we tow the party line. The leaders and seaman will walk the walk and talk the talk. Leaders need to practice what they preach so sailors see it and do it.” (Officer)
- “Every NCO at every level will figure it out. People will get moved around. And people will get used to it; during mess hall hours, in the showers, other situations. On the firing range, when an instructor has to touch [the gay soldier] and show him how to hold a rifle, he has to show everyone that it’s not a big deal.” (Officer)
- “It is important to lead by example. Even if we disagree we have to follow rules.” (Officer)

Comments about the importance of clear policies and guidelines focused on the reality that if enforcement is left to the leaders’ discretion, personal beliefs and values might interfere with smooth implementation:

- “My fear is there is a commanding officer out there who is extremely against it and has influenced their unit that way. There are those commanders out there. We’ve all seen it.” (Officer)
- “Safety—this is strategic—if 10 soldiers are killed over orientation, how do you protect your soldiers, how do you deal with it? [We] need standards and discipline.” (Officer)
- “Leadership needs to definitely be involved with the policies that are being written. [If they’re] asking leadership to effectively integrate, it will need to be clear in the policy writing. [We need] clear guidance on how we’re going to handle housing, don’t just say it’s up to us to handle it.” (Enlisted)
- “If it is repealed, someone way up better have a policy letter saying ‘It’s repealed, this is how it will happen’. It better not be a page or two. It better be a 30-page operations order. Explain everything in detail and take a week to read it. Then we take it and say, ‘Fellas, here in a nutshell is what 30 pages say on the repeal’. If they just put it on my lap it is an issue.” (Officer)
- “Create the resolutions; if you don’t give me the guidelines, you’re setting me up for failure.” (Enlisted)

Finally, numerous participants reiterated the importance of leadership actually *enforcing* those standards that are already in place:

- “There are standards. If you’re in the military, there are rules. ... Consistency is important.” (Enlisted)

- “Standards have to be enforced and in place. Commanders and supers need to know them. Subordinates need to know as well. Some people don’t know what fraternization is. Everyone needs to know what the standards are.” (Officer)
- “There are standards that are maintained. There are still rules about sexual harassments, and civil rights, that people violate.” (Officer)

Although many participants emphasized the need for standards, some suggested that standards are not always fully enforced. The following illustrative comment was from a senior commissioned officer:

- “There will be concern something bad might happen to a homosexual in the military. Infantry [guys] want to fight; they join because they want to fight. Yes, it is against the UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice] for the guys to be beating on each other, but guys fight all the time, and I’m not going to charge them for it.” (Officer)

3.7.2 Revised Policies

The need for clear policies and strong leaders echoed throughout the groups. In addition, though, numerous participants said that certain policies will need to be changed if gays and lesbians are to be able to serve freely. Some were suggestions for—or even questions about—general revisions:

- “How do you write new standards of conduct that don’t take away rights of others? Do we say no one can dance?” (Officer)
- “Rules, laws, [and] codes of conduct will need to be changed; you have to change the code.” (Officer)

Others, however, referenced specific policies that need to be addressed. From our list of codes in Table 3-6, the following issues were raised in this set of focus groups.

3.7.2.1 Housing/Berthing/Billeting/Showers

The greatest concern expressed by focus group participants was around personal privacy. Specific areas of concern included housing and showers. Some recognized this concern, but said their colleagues were over-reacting:

- “[There is] no need for separate showers. People will get over it when people realize that they are not being hit on or approached in the shower.” (Officer)

- “[It] always depends on the unit of people. It may not be an issue at all. When they were at training camps, they were in same rooms as females—they used the same showers, but [they] took turns. Systems were in place to keep them separate. [It would] still [be] a little uncomfortable, but it could be dealt with.” (Officer)
- “About separate facilities: we all went to college and stayed in dorms, we are all adult [now] and we have accepted [it].” (Officer)

Nevertheless, numerous participants said they felt that there should be separate gay and straight areas if DADT is repealed:

- “I have an 18 year old son contemplating joining; if you are putting him into a room with an openly gay guy, I’m not okay with that.” (Enlisted)
- “Females had their tent, males had their tent; now you are putting straight males in danger just like females were in danger.” (Enlisted)
- “We need to address infrastructure—segregation of barracks or showers. If I saw a gay guy going to the shower, [or a guy] I heard was gay, I wouldn’t go.” (Officer)
- “If my roommate turns out to be homosexual, I feel like I am part of his target audience. It is a violation of a social norm; for example you wouldn’t have me room with a female.” (Officer)
- “If you bunk a straight man and gay man together, the first time some behavior happens (that the straight man considers the least bit questionable) there is likely to be a fight or there may be a complaint registered.” (Officer)

Others supported separation, but indicated that, in and of itself, such separation might have a negative impact on unit cohesion:

- “It will open a big can of worms. You have to take a pro active action. Now are you going to have gay and lesbian barracks separate from heterosexual housing? Or, once that happens, now the door is wide open. Are we going to have Black housing, Latino, Anglo housing? Leaving the door wide open for anyone who is different. ‘By God, I Am Irish. Irish housing!’” (Enlisted)
- “Open bay showers—if you know somebody is a homosexual, you are going to lose effectiveness because you will have to have your own time, then they will need time.” (Enlisted)

3.7.2.2 Discrimination Concerns/Equal Opportunity Complaints

Several participants expressed concern about what would constitute a valid discrimination complaint—for example, would Service members be able to tell gay jokes without reprisal? Similarly, there were suggestions that commanders would have to change how they spoke to their troops:

- “Leaders will have to watch their words and drill instructors will not be able to say, ‘Hey you faggot’... the idea of calling someone a ‘faggot’ is to break them down, but in a situation with someone who really is gay, the person will probably take issue with this reprimand.”(Enlisted)

3.7.2.3 UCMJ

The primary issue raised during the focus groups was the fact that sodomy is a crime within the current UCMJ. Participants indicated that this statute will need to be removed from military law if repeal were to occur.

3.7.2.4 Grooming

Several individuals expressed concern about what repeal might mean for what are acceptable standards of appearance; in most of these discussions, other participants insisted that “the standards are the standards” and gay Service members will be expected to wear their uniforms in the same ways as heterosexual Service members:

- “Does a rainbow tattoo fall into something that is unacceptable or is it OK?” (Officer)
- “[You] can’t wear [your] uniform in parades. [And you] can’t go to political rallies in uniform. ...Being gay won’t change that aspect.”(Enlisted)
- “There is a strong PDA policy now, and that is unlikely to change. That is all in effect and won’t change—same with the dress code. That’s not going to change.”(Enlisted)

3.7.2.5 Fraternization

Comments regarding fraternization were often blended with statements about rules for sexual conduct. The following is one of the few examples of how this issue was raised:

- “Commanders will need to take long hard looks at existing regulations like fraternization, equal opportunity, inappropriate relationships. If the law is changed and sexual orientation can’t be discriminated against then it needs to be enforced and harassment among Service members needs to be protected. Sometimes they do a good job of it and sometimes they don’t. So it will change that aspect of military life.” (Officer)

3.7.2.6 Sexual Conduct

Participants often expressed concern about how rules for sexual conduct—currently written to pertain to male-female relationships—will be adapted to take into account same-sex relationships. The overriding argument was that these rules need to focus on sexual conduct, period; not the gender of the parties involved:

- “Now, if I have someone of the opposite sex in my office, I keep the door open or have someone else in the room as a witness. I would have someone else in the room if I knew that person is homosexual.” (Officer)
- “Uphold common standards. Standards for male/female relationships should be the same as male/male.” (Enlisted)
- “Public display of affection [and] guidelines need to be clear.” (Enlisted)

3.7.2.7 Conscientious Objector

In this set of focus groups no one used the phrase “conscientious objector” (although it did emerge in other forums, such as the IEFs and inbox comments). Regardless, several individuals commented on the perceived need to allow Service members to leave the military honorably before their obligation has been completed if repeal takes place:

- “Those that have signed the contract under the current law should be able to get out under a good conduct discharge or some sort of honorable discharge. The contract said no gays, so there should be an out for those who do not want to serve with gays.” (Enlisted)
- “Other people, of lower rank, would not be as accepting of the repeal and may feel imposed upon. They may have the attitude of, ‘If I don’t really like what I see and this was not part of my contract, can I get out?’” (Officer)

- “[It’s] silly, but a lot of guys join the Marine Corps with the understanding there aren’t homosexuals allowed, so how do you address that, what rights do they have? When you sign up for the Marine Corps you give up your rights and do what you are told, but there will be ill will as a result.” (Officer)

3.7.2.8 Reinstatement of Previously Discharged Gay/Lesbian Service Members

While some participants spoke of leaving, others talked about the possibility of reinstating gay and lesbian Service members who were discharged under DADT:

- “Other soldiers got discharged and put out because of being gay or lesbian. Is there any grandfathering potential? If there is a repeal, will there be a relief for the situation (past soldiers put out of the army because they were gay or lesbian)? Gay and lesbian soldiers who served 18 to 20 years as an officer, and get put out because of sexuality should not.” (Officer)
- “Give homosexual re-enter packets.” (Officer)

3.7.2.9 Benefits for Partners of Gay/Lesbian Service Members

Finally, clear discussions about the impact of DOMA notwithstanding, in several focus groups there were participants who commented on spousal benefits for partners of gay and lesbian Service members:

- “It’s a question of fairness; [you’ve] got to do it with everybody.” (Officer)
- “It will impact family, housing, and it gets into policy like the one man one woman marriage act—how is that impacted? How does that impact benefits?” (Officer)

3.7.3 Process of Implementation

In addition to issues around leadership and policies, participants often spoke about the general process issues they believed needed to be considered if repeal is to be implemented successfully. Despite being part of a discussion process soliciting their input about potential problems and suggested solutions, a few individuals appeared concerned that the military was going to implement repeal without careful planning:

- “If this is going to happen anyway, we need to think about the problems.”(Enlisted)

- “Taking a long look we need to address this as an organization. [Is this] an outside group trying to influence the way we exist?” (Officer)

At least one individual stated that the repeal should not occur all at once, but that change should take place carefully and gradually:

- “I think it should be phased in, don’t just hit us all at once. If we’re to take a few openly gay Marines and throw them in an infantry unit, they would be eaten alive. It would be chaos and bad for them. If it would be phased in, it would be better.”(Enlisted)

Most commonly, focus group members commented on the perceived need for education and training in order for repeal to occur smoothly. Some were explicitly opposed to such processes, as evidenced by the following interchange during a focus group with E7-E9 personnel:

- *Participant 1*: “In the near-term [we] will have very intense EO training.”
- Participant 2*: “Stop the classes. ... More classes don’t help.”
- Participant 3*: “Education isn’t the answer.”
- Participant 4*: “They’ll [the younger soldiers will] resent more education.”
- Participant 5*: “Leave it alone.”

Similar sentiments were expressed in other groups:

- “Education and training would just make it worse.”(Enlisted)
- “I don’t think they will have to remake classes. All the same rules still apply.”(Enlisted)
- “They keep adding on training that we don’t really need and it just takes away time for core training.”(Enlisted)
- “There will be tons of sensitivity trainings, and we know that doesn’t work well.” (Officer)
- “It will be difficult to teach the leaders how to teach their troops acceptance. It is difficult to write a curriculum that instructs people to potentially go against moral convictions and to accept and be OK with the open homosexuality.” (Officer)

Not everyone was so against additional training, however, as evidenced by the following statements:

- “[The] command as a whole should get training, and be reminded, ‘Here are the rules.’” (Officer)

- “Education about facts, myths, and misconceptions is important.”(Enlisted)
- “The education needs to start now before we start the repealing process. Gay jokes are commonplace in this environment. We need to start weeding out those jokes now. They’re hurtful and unacceptable.” (Officer)
- “Education. There’s an overarching ignorance of the issues.” (Officer)
- “Education has to go both ways: get training for homosexuals for them to understand that they need to help everyone to understand their views.” (Officer)
- “I do not know how to explain to my troops that it is OK to accept male homosexuality and live with, work with, and shower with that person. I do not know how to sell the behavior because I view it as disgusting or repugnant.” (Officer)

3.8 Summary

In our analysis of these focus group notes, as seen, we were able to make only a couple of distinctions between enlisted personnel and officers, largely having to do with issues of implementation and leadership. Nevertheless, our findings do suggest that for most issues surrounding a repeal of DADT, there is a divergence of opinions. Some Service members believe that allowing gays and lesbians to serve freely would be a “disaster,” while others suggest that it will make little or no difference in how the military functions. Some state that they will immediately try to get out of their service obligations if repeal is implemented, while others think such responses are overreactions. Our findings illustrate that the idea of integrating gays and lesbians into the military is a complex and emotional issue, with numerous participants taking a decidedly negative stance on the issue; nevertheless, our findings also suggest that there are military personnel who would accept the change and who believe the United States military is capable of integrating another minority group into the services.

CHAPTER 4. INBOX COMMENT ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents findings from an analysis of two subsets of DoD inbox comments on potential repeal of DADT. The first subset includes 546 comments from April 18, 2010, when the inbox opened, through the end of June. The second subset consists of the Phase 1 comments, plus an additional 959 comments submitted from July through mid-August. For all inbox correspondents we have information about the writer's gender, Service, pay grade and if s/he was Active Duty or Reserve. Because these are the only qualitative data for which we can systematically examine responses by gender, we purposively sampled the Phase I comments to ensure sufficient representation of female Service members' voices. Of the 546 comments, we took roughly twice as many from females (350) as from males (196). Phase II of our analysis focused primarily on discerning any differences by Service; accordingly, we chose a sample with roughly equal numbers of comments from each of the five Service branches. All comments were read and coded using the comprehensive coding scheme developed by the Westat qualitative analysis team as presented in Chapter 1 and further described in Chapters 2 and 3. In this chapter, we present and discuss only those codes for which we had a sufficient number of comments such that we could explore differences by gender, Service, or pay grade.

Our primary aims for the Phase 1 analyses were twofold. First, we sought to determine if female correspondents raised certain issues proportionately more or less often than male correspondents. Second, we looked at whether and how the content of the females' comments meaningfully differed from those expressed by their male counterparts. Phase 1 results (Sections 4.2 through 4.7) are presented for most codes, excluding only those for which there were only a very few coded statements. For Phase II, although we coded the entire dataset of 1,505 comments, we targeted our analyses to those issues that were raised most often by correspondents and seemed suggestive of differences in perspective by Service, or, secondarily, by pay grade group. Section 4.8 presents the results of the Phase 2 analyses. Section 4.9 summarizes the findings from both sets of analyses.

A few caveats are in order: (1) This analysis is based on very small subsets of a larger dataset comprised of approximately 70,000 comments; (2) The reader should not infer any quantitative meaning from the number of quotations used to illustrate a particular code or difference within a code; and (3) Regardless of their gender or Service affiliation, correspondents who took the time to sit down and compose a comment were likely those with strong opinions to share, whether in favor

of or against repeal. These views should therefore not be construed as representative of any larger population.

4.2 Individual Factors

4.2.1 Religious and Moral Beliefs/Values

Both males and females expressed the view that repeal of DADT will be problematic because they or other Service members hold religious and moral beliefs that are opposed to homosexuality:

- “It is morally and spiritually wrong and inappropriate to flaunt that type of relationship. I understand that these types of relationships exist and I’m not prejudice against it, but I prefer not to know.” (female)
- “...homosexuality is morally offensive. Like adultery, and drug use, I cannot tolerate homosexuality. I will not work side by side with someone that is an adulterer, a drug addict, or a homosexual.” (male)
- “Homosexuality is also against many Service members’ religious beliefs. I think we will alienate them if we repeal the policy.” (female)
- “Homosexuality goes against what the majority of the military Service members beliefs to be a moral way of life.” (male)

Others who opposed repeal were concerned about violations of their own religious freedom. Males, especially, also argued that repeal of DADT would negatively affect cohesion and morale:

- “To allow openly homosexual soldiers to serve next to hardened soldiers with Christian values is very corrosive to unit morale and cohesion.” (male)
- “As uniformed Service members we are expected and are required to uphold a higher set of morals and character than our civilian counterparts. With the repeal of this law you will greatly degrade the morale of our fighting force...”(male)

Some male correspondents who favored repeal argued that religious considerations should be irrelevant in a military context:

- “Why treat them [gays and lesbians] differently? Most of the biases against them are religiously based, that is not supposed to govern the Air Force as far as I know.” (male)
- “My stance on DADT is this. If a person is competent, and willing to defend this country they...are already serving; let them serve with dignity, integrity, and self

assurance. They should be given the opportunity. You can argue the morality of their lifestyle, but I do not believe it would deter from their work ethic. There are plenty of slackards who live a 'NORMAL' lifestyle." (male)

- "My personal belief is against homosexuality. My personal convictions are that it is not natural and goes against God's law. However, I believe in treating everyone as a human being and that everyone deserves respect no matter what race, creed, color, religion you happen to be." (male)

4.3 General Impact

4.3.1 Overall Impact

Female Service members offered both positive and negative comments on the anticipated overall impact of repeal of DADT. Most such positive comments argued that repeal would improve military effectiveness while reflecting the values the military seeks to uphold:

- "It is a long overdue reform and I am confident that the Armed Forces will be stronger and better if/when Congress lifts the legislative restrictions." (female)
- "I believe the law banning the service of gays/lesbians in the military is ineffective as well as outdated. I have 15 years of service, and have rarely encountered a unit or group of coworkers that seemed hostile toward gays or that indicated they would have a problem serving with gays. I also believe that the [current DADT] policy creates more problems than it solves....It is both mentally and emotionally destructive on a human level and often forces out officers and enlisted who make invaluable contributions to their units and are often times highly stratified in their units." (female)
- "This policy change will only ensure good, competent people will not lose their jobs for what they do when they are not in uniform...I believe that this change will only enhance who we are as a great nation. This will help us promote peace and implement non-prejudicial acts rather than hatred." (female)
- "Repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is a must. It will affect the military positively. We fight for freedom and people within our own military are being discriminated against because of sexual orientation. There is no need for this law, the law prevents people in the military from being open about who they are and this is the very thing we fight to defend." (female)

Taking the counter view, some females opposed repeal of DADT on grounds that it would be unduly and unfairly stressful and disruptive to unit cohesion:

- “If the military accepts open homosexuals, conflict between Service members will increase. Most of the military is conservative. It will be very difficult for homosexuals to find their niche within the ranks. They will most likely be outcasts since people usually hang out with those they who have similar values.” (female)
- “While I believe that people should be able to love who they love, I believe that repealing the ‘Don’t ask, Don’t tell’ policy will be detrimental to the well-being of the armed services. In the midst of war, Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, and Sailors are under a tremendous amount of stress and I feel that added stress of controversial sexuality is unnecessary for both sides of the opinion spectrum.” (female)
- “The repeal means opening the military up to a huge non-military, personal and cultural sensitive issue ... [which has] no place within an already over-burdened military setting. Our servicemen and women are charged with the utmost task of keeping our nation safe; that is a difficult enough mission, without adding in the complications and stresses of today’s social controversies.” (female)

4.3.2 Repeal of DADT is a Distraction

As suggested in the earlier discussion about the timing of repeal, both female and male Service members commented that repeal would be a costly distraction at a time when our nation is waging two wars. Males were proportionally more likely to send such comments than females:

- “The last thing a combat soldier needs is a distraction or distrust of another soldier in training or in a combat situation. It is my personal opinion that allowing a soldier to be openly gay in today’s military is a bad choice. I feel that what someone does with their personal life is their business but when the choices you make could possibly determine if someone lives or dies special consideration must be taken.” (male)
- “I think this is not a problem that we should be spending time and money on while we have soldiers in combat risking their lives for this country!” (male)
- “The whole foundation of the U.S. Armed Forces is based on morale and discipline. We are fighting two wars; how can we possibly afford the time to deal with issues facing an ‘openly gay’ military.” (female)
- “...In these days of tight budget, how is the US Government/Military going to financially support all the potential bathroom and bedroom changes that could be required based on the repeal?” (male)
- “... the accommodations to house gay and straight Service members would cost the military a lot of money. This could potentially cause EO complaints from both gay and straight Service members. The training would also cost money to implement. This whole issue is costing money starting with this survey and printed training materials

ending with separated housing. I would not even want to mention expensive legal battles that will arise.” (female)

4.3.3 Impact Will Vary Over Time

More females than males wrote comments expressing the view that over time the military will adapt to repeal of DADT, and new, more tolerant norms will develop around a Service member’s sexual orientation:

- “People might be against the repeal now, but if the policy gets revealed, people will eventually accept the change and being a homophobic will be a thing of the past.” (female)
- “If ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ is repealed, there will be growing pains as we adapt, but we will eventually adjust; and, similar to the integrations of the past, as the current members retire or separate, there will be new generations for whom homosexuals serving openly will be the norm.” (female)
- “I foresee a lot of resistance should the policy be lifted, but I think with time everything will level out and we will get to a point where we don’t remember when homosexuals were not allowed in the military.” (female)
- “As with any significant shift in social experimentation within the Armed Services, there will be many leadership challenges. As such, [it] is my view and the view of many Sailors in my command, that repealing Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell will create some serious initial trepidation, but we will eventually work through it.” (male)

4.3.4 Impact Will Depend on the Individual

Forty-seven correspondents gave priority to the individual Service members’ characteristics as the most important factor affecting repeal, particularly their ability to perform their duties and uphold military values. Of these 47, 44 were females:

- “Gay or straight shouldn’t even be a factor in whether or not someone can serve their country. I don’t care what the airman fighting next to me does in their bedroom. I care that they can fire their weapon and defend their country.” (female)
- “Sexual orientation should not be a factor when it comes to serving our country; it is up to the member’s professionalism and capabilities to succeed in their career to accomplish the mission. Who they love/date/marry is a personal decision.” (female)

- “If you can embody the values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment, there is not a single reason why homosexuals cannot serve as equals amongst heterosexuals. Your sexual identity does NOT define your advancement and capabilities within your work environment.” (female)

Female correspondents also emphasized the point that if DADT is repealed, all Service members, regardless of sexual orientation, should be held to the same standards:

- “If a US citizen wants to serve their country then I believe they should be given the opportunity. Professional etiquette is the same regardless of gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation.” (female)
- “I have no problem with gays serving openly in the military. However, I expect ALL military bearing to be held in tact and personnel, gay and straight, to be held accountable for their actions if they fail to maintain military bearing.” (female)

4.3.5 Image of the Military

Male and female Service members both commented on how repeal might negatively impact others’ image of the military:

- “I believe a repeal of the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy would simply detract from the professionalism, integrity, and image of the U.S. military.” (male)
- “Everyone will become uncomfortable and the military will become a laughing joke to other countries. We have dominance in the world today but what about tomorrow? Our enemies will see our weakness!” (female)
- “The military has long been known for its high standards of behavior and reducing those standards by permitting homosexual activity would erode our professional image and esprit de corps.” (male)
- “Allowing homosexuality will send a clear message that the U.S. has an “anything goes” mentality.” (female)

Only females, however, expressed the opposing view, that repeal would bolster the U.S. military’s image by exemplifying important American values such as tolerance, equality, and professionalism:

- “I believe that this policy/law change will only enhance who we are as a great nation. We claim to be free when other nations have already accepted this factor into their environment. This is only something that will help us promote peace and implement non-prejudicial acts rather than hatred.” (female)

- “The civilian sector has accommodated the issue and has managed professionalism in this aspect. It would be a disappointment that our U.S. military could not meet that same professionalism, as we are the Nation’s representatives of the utmost professionalism.” (female)
- “Gays and lesbians have been serving in the Armed Forces since the inception of our Country. They love this Country just as much as heterosexuals. They have been ‘outed’ while serving humiliated in front of their peers, beaten up and given dishonorable discharges in the past (and even present day). This must end. This is NOT what are Country is about.” (female)
- “We aren’t allowed to discriminate based on race, religion, sex or ethnicity so why say someone who chooses to love someone of the same sex is not worthy of serving in the military?” (female)

4.3.6 Military Values

More female than male Service members expressed support for repeal based on core military values such as integrity and honor:

- “However well intentioned, ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ is undermining military Core Values (in the USN, our core values are honor, courage and commitment) by forcing homosexuals to live a lie.” (female)
- “The Seven Army Values - Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless-Service, Honor, INTEGRITY, and Personal Courage: we can recite them over and over again, but we need to start living them. What are we out their fighting for if it is not to protect the rights and freedoms of human beings everywhere? The (DADT) policy asks soldiers and leaders to forfeit their honor and integrity each and every day because of who they are. At the end of the day, all you have is your integrity. That’s all they want back, no special recognition.” (male)
- “I think the repeal of the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy is a good move forward for our military service because it allows those who have been serving proudly as Active Duty and Reserves to live up to their respective Core Values.” (female)

Proportionally more male Service members commented about the potentially negative impact of repeal on military values and good order and discipline:

- “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Policy should not be repealed. Homosexuality degrades military values. Those individuals will not be treated the same and it will ultimately cause major problems with discipline and will bring a divide among hetero and homosexuals.” (male)

- “The direct effect would be the degradation of ‘good order and discipline’ within units and a diminished trust toward healthy working relationships.” (male)

4.3.7 Gays and Lesbians Are Here Now

Many correspondents, both male and female, acknowledged that gays and lesbians are already serving in the military. However, they had different views of this fact depending upon whether they believed repeal would have positive or negative effects on the military.

4.3.7.1 Here Now – Support Repeal

In relatively equal proportions, females and males supported repeal on the grounds that gays and lesbians are already serving effectively and with honor:

- “Everyone needs to understand that there are men and women in the armed services and are gay. They work alongside us every day without us having any knowledge of it. They fight and die for our country and they deserve the respect that every member of the armed forces gets.” (female)
- “I do not have any issue with having gays or lesbians serving our country, as many have been serving honorably even currently.” (female)
- “We have worked beside personnel who are homosexual for years. I am not sure how continuing prejudice based on sexual orientation would benefit the Armed Forces.” (male)
- “They are already serving; let them serve with dignity, integrity, and self assurance.” (male)

Female and male correspondents also said that the current policy is discriminatory, wasteful, and stressful for gays and lesbians:

- “I believe removing the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy is the only appropriate action for the military. For starters, there are already many Service members who are gay while serving. These people are good at their jobs and are valuable members of our service. Losing them because of their sexual orientation is a waste of training, resources and talent.” (female)
- “Members are asked to lie, counter to ‘I shall not lie, cheat or steal.’ - Members are asked to ‘...support and defend the Constitution...’ but are not supported or defended themselves. In fact, they lose their employment if DADT is violated. They’re asked to

carry a secret that wears at their emotional well being and does not allow them to fully be honest about their lives, thus contributing to both a higher suicide rate and increased likelihood they'll experience sexual assault or sexual harassment.” (female)

- “Although controversial, I believe that an inclusion of gay individuals into the service will not pose a big problem. In 30 years of service I have known people that were gay and have had to live in fear of discovery and losing their jobs. I feel this is a disservice to those individuals that choose to serve their country.” (male)
- “I, for one, am happy to see the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy end. In my 16 years in the Air Force, I’ve served with some homosexuals who were forced to keep their lifestyle ‘in the closet’ because of this policy. Each of them were quality servicemen, as qualified and dedicated as any of their peers. That they were forced to keep such an important aspect of their lives a ‘dirty little secret,’ however, caused them undue stress. In one case, this stress was a contributing factor to a drinking habit that became out of control and eventually required treatment.” (male)

A few lesbians⁷ echoed what the above Service members wrote, and described how serving in the military under DADT has affected their own well-being and freedom to interact honestly with their fellow Service members:

- “I served in the USAF for over 20 years, deployed in support of our nations war on terror and been selected to a special duty assignment, where it was incumbent on me to train new military recruits on basic military life. I have always done the job I was trained to do and always lived with the fear that if I was found out to be homosexual I would be discharged from service. This and only this has always been in the back of my mind as a constant companion as I have gone about my daily duties...” (female)
- “I feel that the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy should be repealed because it interferes with gay Service members civil rights. I am a gay Service member and I feel that I have to live a double life. I am making great friends at my base but I can’t talk to them about the biggest part of my life, and that’s my girlfriend. When she comes to visit me, have to tell people she’s my sister or best friend. I am paranoid all the time about someone finding out and turning me in. I want to serve my country and go to college but it’s very hard to hide a big secret.” (female)

Several female correspondents added that, all things considered, allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly should be a non-issue:

- “This should be no big deal. I am a female Vet. I can’t see how an openly gay person will cause any more disturbances in the foxhole than a female in the same job or foxhole.” (female)

⁷ A small number of those offering comments also volunteered their sexual orientation.

- “In all reality there were gays and lesbians in all branches but it has been under wraps so they can serve, just because it’s now in the open should not change anything.” (female)
- “I think Don’t Ask Don’t Tell should be repealed. We live in a new era now where we have accepted homosexuality into our culture as a real sexual preference and not as something that can be fixed in a person. I think it would be great if people could serve as they are and be proud of themselves in the military. I don’t see any reason that there would be any negative impact toward military members because of it.” (female)

4.3.7.2 Here Now – Oppose Repeal

The majority of individuals whose correspondence acknowledged that gays and lesbians are already serving, however, opposed the repeal of DADT for a variety of reasons. Although males and females both took this position, females proportionally were far more likely to assert a negative position on these grounds. Many said the current policy “works” and therefore saw no reason for change:

- “Do Not Ask/Do Not Tell should be left the way it is. Why change something that works?” (female)
- “I strongly disagree with the repeal of the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy. I believe it will cause more conflict and more hazing among the military. It seems to be working perfectly as is.” (female)
- “I have no issue with homosexuals serving in the military; however, I believe for the current times in which we live the current policy is adequate.” (male)

Some suggested DADT remain in place to protect gays and lesbians:

- “I feel that repealing the DADT Policy could cause potential harmful ramifications to those who are openly serving as gay Americans. The way that many people are raised could cause fear and in turn violence against what they fear (the gay Service members).” (female)
- “Even though there are, no doubt, homosexuals among those Marines, as recruits and perhaps even as instructors, the anonymity that “Don’t ask, don’t tell” demands protects the individual’s right to sexual privacy in the same way the physical barriers we place between males and females.” (female)

Finally, there were 24 comments in which correspondents said that although gays and lesbians are already in the military, they (the writers) would prefer not to know a colleague’s sexual orientation, 23 of these were from females:

- “In this situation ignorance is bliss. I know I serve with homosexuals now, but I rather not know, and not have that extra worry on my shoulders.” (female)
- “If you’re gay, well keep it to yourself. It’s not like heterosexual people go around letting people know their preference in the opposite sex, neither should gays.” (female)
- “If they are, that’s their choice, however, me knowing causes unnecessary stress when considering things like showers and changing clothes at the gym.” (female)

4.3.8 Openness

This code refers to the potential repeal will have for gay and lesbian Service members to be open about their sexual orientation. While relatively few correspondents of either gender commented on the topic, females noted several problems that openness might create:

- “By allowing open sexuality into the same sex squad bay, we will detract from the focus of training, whether we like it or not. Sexuality has no place in an open squad bay or open showers. By giving homosexuals the option to be open, we are alienating 99.4% of the force, and taking away from the sense of “brotherly/sisterly love” that we are trying to develop.” (female)
- “I do not believe that homosexuals should receive any preferences whatsoever just to prove they are not being discriminated against. I want to know how I will be protected against females coming onto me. I’m sure males want to how they will [be] protected against males coming onto them.” (female)
- “It should not matter if a person is gay or not in order to serve in the military. However, it could escalate into a problem when folks are open with their lifestyle. Homosexuality being ‘open’ will be a problem, especially if people of the same sex are kissing, etc...there has to be a balance.” (female)

4.3.8.1 Flamboyance

Both males and females said they would be uncomfortable dealing with overtly stereotypical, “flaunting,” or “flamboyant” behavior.

- “The males have these funky hand gestures, lisp and feminine ways.” (female)
- “Flamboyant behavior by any members should not be allowed or tolerated.”(female)

- “I have a personal opinion of, if you are homosexual don’t flaunt it in my face. I don’t need to know what your sexual orientation is and neither does anyone else unless it is your significant other.” (female)
- “I guess I am old school and don’t mind Soldiers that are homosexual joining but I just don’t want to see them acting flamboyantly feminine.” (male)
- “Our military is the back bone of our country, the “Big Stick”. Who would take us serious if we were to advertise that we painted our stick “PINK?” (male)
- “We don’t want to represent ourselves with men skipping around and women with shaved heads, not because it is offensive but because it is unprofessional.” (male)

4.3.8.2 Honesty

Female correspondents, including several lesbians, commented on the contradictions of asking gays and lesbians to hide their sexual orientation while serving in a military that emphasizes integrity:

- “In the Marine Corps, integrity is a very important thing. Joining into the USMC, people lie about what they’re sexuality is only to become a fighter for their country. The moment they raise that hand, they lie. Then we’re brain washed to have all the integrity in the world, but when we do admit our sexuality, we’re wrong.” (female)
- “When I was going through my commissioning source, I took an honor oath on the very first day. I promised never to lie. Every day since July 1, 2004, I keep telling lies in order to serve. I lie to my coworkers about my marital status. I lie about who I’m going to visit on leave. I lie every time someone says, ‘you’re single, right?’ They have no idea that I have a partner I consider to be my wife.” (female)
- “Myself along with a good majority of co-workers/friends are gay/lesbian that are in the military and the efforts we have to go through to hide is unreal. Yes it is what you sign up for in the beginning but eventually it becomes basically hiding who you are. I never thought that it would affect my ability to live a happy life . . .” (female)
- “For those who say that the policy works, I ask you, what if there were a new policy put in place to hide who you are from those in which you work with.... creating a false sense of reality for the others. How would that make you feel?” (female)
- “To lie about something as important as their own identity completely flies in the face of being an officer with any semblance of integrity.” (female)

4.3.8.3 Freely Serve

More females than males offered comments that, with repeal, gays and lesbians would be able to freely serve their country:

- “I think it’s shameful that a majority of our military, government and the American public does not find it morally wrong that a gay Service member be willing to do die for his or her country, but cannot be respected or recognized as a whole person.” (female)
- “It is absolutely vicious and immoral to discharge a Service member who raised their right hand to fight for a country they love and cherish just because they are gay, lesbian or bisexual.” (female)
- “In my opinion, being a young Airman, this whole DADT policy is just stupid. People should be able to be themselves anywhere, anytime, even in the military.” (female)

4.4 Impact on Military Life

4.4.1 Overall Cohesion

Females who wrote about the perceived impact of repeal on overall cohesion were about evenly divided between those who believed repeal would have a negative impact, and those who said repeal would have no impact or even a positive impact. Of the males who addressed this issue, all but one asserted that repeal would have a negative effect. The following comments reflect the negative position:

- “Everyone who joins the military understands the policy, if you allow open ‘alternative life style’ to occur within your military ranks that good order & discipline will go out the window.” (female)
- “I do understand that by not allowing them to serve is a form of prejudice, however this would create a hostile and extremely uncomfortable environment for all Service members.”(female)
- “Having soldiers that are attracted to the same sex will compromise unit cohesion and create an environment that would be uncomfortable to soldier that do not agree with having same sex soldiers shower with them, sleep in close quarters with them and other compromising situations.” (female)

4.4.1.1 Task Cohesion

Task cohesion refers specifically to the ability of a unit to work together as a team to accomplish their mission. Service members from both genders expressed concern that repeal will have a negative effect on task cohesion:

- “I think removing the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy will cause a negative effect. I believe it will cause more tension and isolation in work centers. Causing workflow to decrease and attitudes of tension and conflict to arise.” (female)
- “I disagree with changing this law. While you are at home station it may not have as much affect on Airmen; however, while in a deployed location it has a great affect when you have open bays and basically living on top of one another per say. We need our Airmen focused on the mission and not on issue of this while they are in harm’s way.” (female)
- “I cannot rely on someone who I don’t feel comfortable with, nor can they trust me. A lack of trust turns into a lack of cohesion which eventually leads to mission failure.” (male)
- “The direct effect would be the degradation of ‘good order and discipline’ within units and a diminished trust toward healthy working relationships.” (male)

Both males and females also took a neutral view of the impact of repeal on task cohesion, saying that sexual orientation is irrelevant to a Service member’s ability to do a job:

- “I don’t have an issue with gays serving openly in the military. How does sexual preference have anything to do with how well someone can fix a plane, fire a weapon, or fulfill one of the many other roles we have in the military?” (female)
- “Most people who enter the military do so because they have the basic desire to serve and do well in their jobs. Their sexual preference has nothing to do with it. The bottom line is that if the person is doing their job; that is what matters.” (female)
- “Don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t care. Whether an individual is gay, straight, black, white, female or male should have no impact on the mission as long as everyone works together as a team to get the job done!!” (female)
- “I am a wing commander over 1000 guardsmen. I don’t care what the orientation of my people are. I only care if they are good soldiers, dedicated to their country, and desiring to serve.” (male)
- “My stance on DADT is this. If a person is competent, and willing to defend this country. . . I do not believe it would deter from their work ethic. There are plenty of slackards who live a ‘NORMAL’ lifestyle.” (male)

- I really don't care if someone is homosexual or about their preference all together as long as they are willing to work." (male)

Overall, males who wrote about task cohesion were about evenly divided between repeal having a positive or negative effect; females, however, were far more likely to say they believed repeal would have a neutral or even a positive effect on task cohesion and unit effectiveness:

- "As Battalion Commander for a unit that recently completed 12-month combat deployment to Iraq, I can say unequivocally that gay/lesbian Soldiers are integrated across our force, at the lowest tactical levels, with no negative operational impacts. In fact, my unit was far better, particularly technically and from a leadership perspective, with these Soldiers in positions of operational and organizational significance." (female)
- "I have served with gays in the military and have found them to be of high caliber and encompassing all the Army values and performance standards. Performance has NEVER been an issue." (female)

4.4.1.2 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion refers to the ability of Service members to get along with and relate to one another in social settings, including outside of work. The relatively few correspondents who offered comments on this issue, both males and females, shared the view that repeal would be likely to harm overall social cohesion by creating tensions at social events and provoking the formation of cliques:

- "I believe by lifting 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell', there will be an increase in violence, extreme clash of personalities, and create a harsh environment. The violence will increase at base clubs, events, and even squadron events. There will be tension between co-workers, and when alcohol is involved at squadron events the tension may lead to violence." (male)
- "My personal thoughts are that there will be a formation of cliques so to speak and with that a high probability of favoritism forming within these groups, which could greatly impact those not inline or adapted to that way of life."(female)

Off-Duty Socializing

Both males and females who explicitly commented on the subject foresaw a negative impact of repeal on off-duty socializing.

- “I don’t want to have brother-like relationships with homosexuals, have them over to my house, have my kids around them, or share my feelings with that kind of person. I don’t want a homosexual in a fighting hole with me wondering what he is thinking about me or have his body against mine in any way.” (male)
- “How will it fair for me to potentially decline social events with my gay boss or subordinates because of my religious beliefs? How do I host events without EO/IG complaints because I would not invite gay couples? My moral values cannot be compromised to support what I consider immoral behavior.” (female)

One lesbian correspondent described how living under DADT policy has negatively affected her social relationships with other Service members, thereby affirming the two comments made above:

- “I feel strongly about the homosexual policy of the United States military. I am a proud member of the USAF. I deploy twice per year and sacrifice a lot of time away from my very legitimate family to fly and serve this country. I have less than a handful of military friends because of the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy. If I invite someone to my home for a barbeque or any other activity that straight families take for granted, it makes my sexual orientation too obvious.” (female)

4.4.2 Harassment and Assaults

This code covers all forms of harassment and assaults including jokes, verbal abuse, assault, and gay bashing. Female correspondents raised the issue more frequently than males, and regardless of their position on repeal, were concerned about the possibility of abuse or harassment often coming from some unspecified “other” person who would cause problems:

- “I definitely feel that we all have the right to serve our country without prejudice but it’s not going to be easy...because you will always have those people who do not like the change. It just worries me that they [gays and lesbians] will be harassed or singled out.” (female)
- “I personally do not have an issue with the amendment. However, I do feel... Individuals (men) who choose to reveal their sexual orientation will pay a very high penalty. I fear for their career and safety.” (female)
- “I feel that repealing the DADT Policy could cause potential harmful ramifications to those who are openly serving as gay Americans. The way that many people are raised could cause fear and in turn violence against what they fear (the gay Service members).” (female)
- I’m not gay myself but I don’t believe there should be a restriction on those who are sharing their sexual preference w/people of their choosing. I CAN however foresee this

being an issue that raises the percentage of hate crimes and discrimination within the armed forces.” (female)

4.4.3 Privacy Concerns

Comments from both males and females addressed issues of privacy, in particular their discomfort with the possibility of sharing tight sleeping quarters and showers with gays and lesbians:

- “It would just make more controversy because as a straight male I would be extremely uncomfortable sharing a shower room with open homosexuals... it would be uncomfortable to soldiers that do not agree with having same sex soldiers shower with them, sleep in close quarters with them and other compromising situations.” (male)
- “A heterosexual woman should not share berthing/bathrooms with homosexual women. I would be very uncomfortable sleeping or showering in front of homosexual women just as I would in front of a man. Because both homosexual women and heterosexual men are attracted to women, I think a hostile environment would be created.” (female)
- “I do not have to shower or sleep in a room with men so I do not want to shower or sleep in the same room as a woman who is homosexual. I would feel uncomfortable changing and sleeping has I would if it was a man in the room. I should not have to accept this.” (female)
- “Has anyone considered where they are going to house homosexuals? I don’t think it is a good idea to house them with straight Marines. You’ll most likely have to create a separate barracks just for these Marines.” (male)

Like the correspondent quoted directly above, the majority of Service members commenting on privacy issues opined that separate facilities and living quarters would be needed for openly homosexual Service members. Both male and female respondents raised concerns about the logistics and cost of providing such facilities, as well as the potential to infringe on individuals rights:

- “To remove this policy at the current time would put our military in a state of turmoil...we would require having separate living areas for men, gay men, women, and gay woman. The other option is to have no living restrictions on sex/sexual preference. Either case would require major changes to infrastructure and organization, as well as drawing a large cost to facilitate these changes.”(male)
- “If we ‘decide’ to do away with the ‘Don’t ask, Don’t tell’ policy, we will now face a new challenge- separation by gender and by preference. We will now have to shovel out more money to build/set aside berthing and showering arrangements for homosexuals.” (female)

- “(Regarding) individual right to privacy: one definition of sexual harassment is “violating personal space,” SECNAVINST 5300.26D. Every time I would share a head with a homosexual male he would be violating my personal space. Sexual harassment is viewed “from the perspective of the recipient” SECNAVINST 5300.26D. The intent of the perpetrator is irrelevant.” (male)
- “... permitting openly gay members will open the field for sexual harassment charges unless separate facilities (dorms, showers, latrines) are build for gay men and women.” (male)
- “I do not have a problem working with gay Service members; rooming with them is altogether a different situation. I feel like their lifestyle shouldn’t infringe on my rights either. So what happens when the enlisted have to share a room with a gay that makes them feel uncomfortable? Does the gay member get the privilege of a private room or does the straight person?” (female)

A few correspondents thought repeal of DADT should not have an adverse effect on Service members’ sense of privacy:

- “I know there were gay girls in my basic and tech school dorms and also gay service-members that I work side-by-side with. I showered with them in the bay in basic, lived with them in the dorms, and now I work with them and it doesn’t bother me in the least.” (female)
- “Gay is not defined as lack of standards or morality. I hear all the time, “Gays are going to try and touch me when I sleep” or “I don’t want a gay guy looking at me in the shower. This is ignorance.” (male)
- “Everyone has a right to their privacy. If the mission is not affected, then drive on. The only time there should be an issue is if the mission or moral conduct is affected.” (female)
- “I wouldn’t care if there was a person of homosexual orientation in the service. Wouldn’t bother me sharing a squad bay and I can’t really seeing it being too much of an issue in the Coast Guard.” (male)

4.4.4 Recruitment and Retention⁸

This group of codes includes comments about the possible impacts of repeal on recruiting and retention of Service members.

⁸ Elsewhere we review recruitment and retention alongside Service members’ willingness to recommend the military to others if DADT were to be repealed. Our Phase I data, however, contain no comments related to recommending military service.

4.4.4.1 Recruitment

Females were more likely than males to comment on recruiting issues. Generally, they saw repeal as expanding the number of recruits and increasing the pool of talent available to the military, with one female speculating that those who had been separated due to DADT might re-enlist:

- “Numbers are slow, the economy is also slow. If we would just allow people to enlist with the way that they are, we’d have a strong fighting force. We’d have numbers sky rocketing.” (female)
- “Please repeal the act. We need all available men and women who are willing to serve their country, no matter what their sexual orientation is.” (female)
- “As it is, there aren’t enough good people in the military, and we shouldn’t turn people away because of things they do in their private life.” (female)
- “I believe that the military will grow its forces and possibly re-enlist prior military service personnel that were excellent workers which had a great deal of knowledge that was lost when this policy came into effect, which will only make our military a stronger fighting force.” (female)

However, one male and one female commented on how community values might adversely affect recruiting after repeal:

- “My main concern deals with mainstream American families who send their Sons and Daughters to us and entrust us to maintain many of the same core values that they have instilled in them. My own family members would not have been supportive of my enlistment in the military at 18 years old if they thought I would be exposed to lifestyle choices not compatible to their own. I fear our recruitment pool will be severely limited as these ideals, regardless of their validity, could not be upheld in the post-Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell military.” (male)
- “You must consider that most of your troops come from small town America, and while in the city and other progressive areas in the country, it may be acceptable to be gay, it is generally not acceptable in small town America. Therefore, you are creating a situation in which you are offending your largest recruiting area by repealing this law.” (female)

4.4.4.2 Retention

Only a fairly small number of correspondents commented on the anticipated impact of repeal on retention. However, males and females expressed very different views on the subject. Males were far more likely to indicate that repeal would affect their willingness to continue serving:

- “I will resign my commission if the policy changes.” (male)
- “I am a 29 year male, I have deployed to Iraq, and I am a Christian...If DADT is repealed, I will be forced to make a decision between my beliefs and my service to the Corps.” (male)
- “If this does get repealed I WILL NOT re-enlist and I speak for many others, we will not tolerate our faith to be disregarded by allowing homosexuals to openly serve.” (male)
- “I am now a FORMER member of the US Navy due to ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ in ‘92, and am now a 2010 FORMER member USNR because of the continued folly by the military of insisting to follow the culture at large into the morass that is political correctness.” (male)
- “I think if this policy is not repealed, I would highly consider getting out. I don’t want any part of a service, no matter how much I love it, that discriminates.” (female)

The majority of female correspondents emphasized the positive benefits of repeal, noting in particular that repeal would mean a stop-loss for well-trained, but gay, Service members:

- “The military as a whole has spent thousands of dollars to train and then discharge individuals because of what they do behind closed doors.” (female)
- “We have lost immeasurable talent and dedication with those discharged or never allowed to enter military service.” (female)

4.5 Impact of Repeal on Family and Community Life

4.5.1 Overall Impact on Family and Community Life

This category refers to the perceived general impact of repeal on families and communities. The following comments illustrate male and female correspondents’ views on how repeal may conflict with the traditional beliefs and values of many Service members and their families:

- “How far will changing the policy go? When and how will these changes affect the lives and standards of those troops that have strong beliefs and family values against homosexuality? I understand the need to embrace and overcome the stigma and fact of homosexuals serving in our military, but there are a lot of issues that will arise from this change.” (female)
- “...will DOD allow gay marriage—along with the corollary benefits? How would this change impact the warrior ethos? Would a change effectively kill the Strong Bonds marriage and family enrichment programs? At what point does a change in policy infringe on the civil rights of those who find active homosexual behavior morally unacceptable?” (male)
- “The Marine Corps legacy is one of traditional values attributed to faith and family. Repeal of this policy would impact that legacy and require additional policy changes throughout the Department of Defense to address the addition of non-traditional members. This is the beginning of the end for the traditional family....The Marine Corps has always been the first to fight. We must stand firm in this fight to protect the traditional family and Corps values.” (female)

However, on the opposite side, correspondents of both genders noted that the current DADT policy unfairly impacts gay and lesbian Service members, their partners, and families by undermining or discounting their support systems:

- “Spouses of SVMs get a myriad of benefits...in my opinion, one of the most important [is]...inclusion and recognition. On the other hand, a gay SVM’s partner enjoys none of those things, again, putting an emotional burden on a person who most certainly has occupational stressors to handle on a normal day. Who does the gay SVM’s partner bond with when the member is on his/her 3rd GWOT deployment? Who notifies the partner if the member is KIA? Where does the partner go for support if we ‘take care of our own’? It’s the little things about inclusion and recognition. On a SVM’s bio, the gay SVM doesn’t list a spouse or partner; it’s blank, completely turning a blind eye to his/her support system.” (male)
- “Qualified individuals are discouraged from joining, and those who do join don’t have the same support that is provided to heterosexual members when it comes to family and life.” (female)
- “. . . yet for them to be given the same benefits as others should be a little more ease to know that if anything happens to them, like the rest of the heterosexuals, their families would also be taken care of.” (male)
- “Could you imagine going in for a checkup and not being able to be honest about your sex life with your medical doctor? Could you imagine your wife/husband, girlfriend/boyfriend getting sick, having a child, or you being deployed and not having a true support system that you can trust? It’s one of the coldest feelings knowing that you live in shame of yourself with wanting to serve your country for freedoms that you yourself cannot have.” (female)

4.5.2 Chaplaincy Services

More male than female Service members—including several chaplains—voiced concerns about challenges and dilemmas chaplains and religious congregations might face if DADT is repealed:

- “Military chaplains who have volunteered to defend the liberties protected in our Constitution shouldn’t be denied those very same liberties. Preventing chaplains from sharing the full counsel of their faith defeats the purpose of the chaplaincy and threatens the free exercise rights of Service members who depend on chaplains.”(female)
- “I served in the active military as a Southern Baptist Chaplain for over 9 years including two deployments to Iraq. I believe that allowing openly gay individuals will create problems such as openly gay chaplains which in many instances will destroy chapel congregations on army posts. Many of these congregations view the issue as moral and that is in their mind a sinful lifestyle that in the civilian sector the minister would be subject to dismissal as he would for any other unrepentant immoral behavior. Many of these congregations do not get to choose the chaplain that is assigned to the chapel and so would be forced to leave in order to find the spiritual leadership they desire and need.” (male chaplain)
- “Forcing chaplains to deny their faith in order to serve in the Armed Forces is a grave threat to the First Amendment and to the spiritual health of Marines, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who depend on them. If the military is forced to promote homosexual behavior, for the first time in American history there will be open conflict between the virtues taught by chaplains and the moral message delivered by the military.”(female)
- “Repealing DADT will impact my religious liberty as a Christian chaplain. The Christian Scriptures make it clear that homosexuality—like fornication and adultery (which are, along with homosexuality, against the UCMJ)—is a sin. All sexual sins inherently break the law of God. If DADT is repealed, then that situation creates an unavoidable conflict with my ability to preach and teach the entirety of the Scriptures with impunity. What is the constitutional basis for the government ever curtailing my freedom of religion?” (male chaplain)
- “Key questions to be considered: Will Chaplains be forced to integrate homosexuals into ‘family’ ministry? If so, what impact will this have on families that do not accept homosexuality? Will Chaplains be limited on what they can define as moral? Until the answers to these questions are presented and the resulting impacts clearly defined, DADT should remain in place.” (male)
- “There exist potential ramifications for those who refuse couples counseling to gays. Chaplains who refuse to counsel gays on how to better their relationships or refuse to allow ‘married homosexuals’ to attend marriage retreats would be subject to discrimination charges even though to allow such things would directly violate many

chaplains' beliefs. If it then becomes mandatory to open these events to all couples, chaplains would quit offering the retreats. When family wellness is so important, this would do nothing but hurt the majority for the sake of a few.” (male)

However, other chaplains—both male and female—offered another perspective on the issue, affirming a commitment to military service regardless of challenges they may face with the repeal of DADT:

- “I will not have any problems, conflicts or difficulty in carrying out my duties as a chaplain if DADT is overturned. I am proud to serve all of my brothers and sisters in uniform. I am a strong believer that the US military will be able to adapt and overcome the DADT transition - just as we have with the integration of women and minorities. Just as we have non-heterosexual citizens and members of society, no one should be prohibited from serving if they volunteer to do so. I do not believe that a person’s sexual orientation impacts their ability to serve, lead or follow. I know that many of chaplain colleagues do not feel the same way and I pray for the future of the chaplain corps.” (male chaplain)
- “I will continue to serve faithfully as an Army Chaplain, I believe God is calling me to serve in a hurting and sinful world. Many times I feel like I am the pastor of Nineveh, and God sent His messenger even there. Jesus prayed in the Garden, ‘Father, I don’t ask you to take them out of the world, but keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world, and neither do I. Your Word is truth, so let this truth make them completely yours.. John 17:15-20. I hear the call and answer, ‘Here I am Lord send and protect me in you power and truth. Spiritually strong and Army strong no matter what comes my way.” (female chaplain)

4.5.3 Impact on Personal Relationships

As noted, a small number of those who left inbox comments self-identified as gay or lesbian. Only lesbian Service members commented on how DADT negatively impacts their relationships with other Service members, their family lives, and, ultimately, their decision on whether or not to stay in the military:

- “I have a wonderful family with three girls who are very happy and well taken care of. They love both their moms and their dad who is also active duty and gets them every other week. They are forced to choose only non-military dependant friends to spend the night. They feel they have to hide something they feel in no way ashamed of. If I could just serve and not have to hide I wouldn’t be separating in less than a year.”(female)
- “When men are interested in me and ask to date me or why I don’t date I can only tell them I’m not interested. It leaves them confused and asking more questions that I

would rather not answer. I wish I could just tell them that I'm gay and have a girlfriend then things would be so much easier.” (female)

4.6 Contextual Factors

4.6.1 Timing

As reflected in our coding scheme (see Chapter 3), correspondents had different perspectives on the timing of repeal, with some saying that this is not the time for repeal, and others asserting “now is as good a time as any.”

4.6.1.1 Why Now?

Approximately the same number of males as females thought the discussion of repeal to be ill-timed:

- “It is my opinion that the drive to review a possible appeal of the ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’ policy at this point in time is ridiculous. Our society at this time is NOWHERE NEAR ready for a change of this magnitude in our military.... I guarantee that if it becomes socially acceptable AT THIS TIME to ‘come out’ and admit a bisexual or homosexual lifestyle would only cause chaos in our military.” (male)
- “I believe this is not the time for us to make huge changes in the military. We are at war and our men and women overseas do not need any more distractions. This issue should be addressed at the appropriate time. That time is not now.” (female)
- “To inflict such a grand experiment on the military in a time of war will be detrimental to the hearts and minds of those fighting the fight and it will absolutely destroy unit cohesion...I know that the change will happen eventually, but I intend to fight against it as long as I can.” (female)

Although males and females were represented by these comments in roughly equivalent numbers, because males represented fewer cases in the database, they were proportionally more likely to express this point of view.

4.6.1.2 Why Not Now?

By contrast, nearly four times as many females as males argued that DADT is outdated, unfair, and needs to be changed immediately, even if the change is painful:

- “I believe that ‘Don’t ask, don’t tell’ is an antiquated law that needs to be repealed however I am not naive to the potential negative effects that could occur as a result of this drastic change. I believe it is a necessary step and one that I am proud the Armed Forces is taking but it will be painful, at least at first.” (female)
- “The time has come to give the equality that is so long overdue.” (male)
- “I feel it [DADT] should be taken out...Why not let every willing and able citizen join the services and be allowed to be themselves while doing so...This time we are behind everyone else in keeping people from choosing to live how they want. Every military member needs a strong family behind them, gays included.” (female)
- “It’s time to get rid of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. We would all be better off if people could be honest and not afraid of being discovered and kicked out. I’ve served with gay Service members. Some were kicked out because of DADT, (they didn’t tell, they were told on) and some left the service because they couldn’t take the stress of hiding and fear of being discharged. Get rid of don’t ask, don’t tell. The time has come.” (female)

4.6.2 Civil Rights

Correspondents often wrote about DADT and its potential repeal in terms of civil rights issues. Both males and females stated their beliefs that DADT discriminates against gays and lesbians, although females were proportionally much more likely to express this perspective:

- “I feel this law is blatantly discriminatory toward the gay and lesbian community and should absolutely be repealed.” (female)
- “I feel that the ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ policy should be repealed because it interferes with gay Service members civil rights. I am a gay Service member and I feel that I have to live a double life.” (female)
- “I know several Service members who are homosexual and who are outstanding soldiers. They work as hard as I do and should be afforded the same right. They should NOT serve in fear. TEAR THIS DADT POLICY DOWN! EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL!” (female)
- “... this is a violation of the 1st amendment right of freedom of expression. Homosexuals are in the military currently and are serving their country with pride. Why should it be up to the DoD to decide if somebody can openly serve as a homosexual?” (male)

An opposing perspective, held by females and males alike, was that repeal will infringe on the civil rights of heterosexuals who oppose the gay lifestyle:

- “You could be infringing on the rights of those who are not comfortable with homosexuality in that they may not want to shower or use heads in front of their homosexual colleagues.” (female)
- “If you do decide to allow homosexuals to freely admit to their sexuality, I believe there MUST be a certain clause that homosexuals and heterosexuals be roomed together to protect our rights. But if you allow homosexuals to be in the military and room with those who they find attractive/have relationships with, you might as well allow heterosexual male and females to live and shower together as there is no difference and either way there will be drama. Heterosexuals have rights too!!!!” (female)

A particular concern was that repeal will infringe upon these individuals’ First Amendment rights:

- “The repeal of DADT will pose Constitutional issues based off of the first Amendment that allows for the free practice of religion.” (female)
- “If the state favors the demands of the homosexual activists over the First Amendment, it is only a matter of time before the military censors the religious expression of its chaplains and marginalizes denominations that teach what the Bible says about homosexual behavior.” (female)
- “Will those who treat gay members equitably, but refuse to validate their lifestyle, have religious protection? We cannot afford the circus repeal will start!” (male)

Finally, males were more likely to assert that the potential repeal of DADT is not a civil rights issue at all:

- “The law currently allows homosexuals to serve their country, period! This talk of ‘who they are’ is just pushing the homosexual agenda and treating it like it is a civil rights issue, which it is not. If homosexuals are given the right to serve because of ‘who they are’, then why can’t individuals be given the right to commit adultery, if that’s ‘who they are’.” (male)
- “Those who boast for their civil liberties knew what rights they have in the military when they join. What discriminations should apply? The Civil Liberties Act of 1991, which applies to civilian rights (far greater than those allotted to service personnel) makes only provisions for discriminations of Age, Disability, Equal Pay/Compensation, Genetic Information, National Origin, Pregnancy, Race/Color, Religion, Retaliation, Gender, and Sexual Harassment with absolutely no mention toward that of Sexual Orientation. Why? Those things can be identified with little proof, based in fact and not the abstract notions such as lust or love. Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and Airmen ousted for expressing their sexual identity are not the unwilling victims of a biased law or a constitutional right. They are the deliberate saboteurs of regulations governing conduct to uphold order and discipline.” (male)

4.6.3 The Military's Relation to the Wider Society

Females offered several comments in support of repeal, with some saying the military, with its history of making social change, should set an example for the rest of society:

- “The military has a history of forcing social change, and I think it does a great job of it. I say press ahead with the repeal of the law, and it will work.” (female)
- “The U.S Military has, historically, been an amazing institution for implementing social change. So far it has been a for-runner for integrating women and multiple races into the work force. In all of these cases, there was a learning curve. There are still people in the work-force who resent these minorities. But the reality of the modern world is that people are different from one another, and we all need to get over it and work together. Removing the ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ Policy and allowing gays to serve openly in the military is just the next step.” (female)
- “The military has always set the example for society in terms of eliminating discrimination and it should do the same on this issue.” (female)

Other females made their case for repeal on the grounds that that the military is supposed to represent the country and therefore should remain in-step with the rest of the country in its course towards accepting gays and lesbians:

- “I feel the military should learn to work in as diverse an environment as the rest of the country.” (female)
- “The Armed Forces are a representation of the American society, so why should ‘certain’ people be discriminated against?” (female)
- “... it’s a new era. The military needs to progress just like any other institution, and I believe that taking this step forward will ultimately lead to an even greater, more successful military force.” (female)

4.6.4 Comparison to Previous Integration Efforts for African Americans and Women

Of the numerous correspondents who compared the repeal of DADT to previous successful efforts to integrate African Americans and women into the military, all were female except for two:

- “I recommend repeal of DADT and believe Service members will make it work, just as they made it work when laws were changed to allow non-whites and females to serve their nation honorably and with pride.” (female)
- “This is an equality issue, and who doesn’t deserve equal rights. We’ve done it before with African Americans, and we have done it before with females. We can do it again. As brothers and sisters in arms, we stand and fight not only for our country, but for one another.” (female)
- “Much like the SAME ignorance spread during the desegregation of the Military. A challenge, yes... but was it the right thing to do, ABSOLUTLEY. Forcing understanding of different backgrounds and cultures for the purposes of strength is what the military does. It’s what it’s good at, WHY are we so afraid of this. Fifty years ago, on July 26, 1948 President Harry Truman issued Executive Order to desegregate the armed forces. The fight for Gay rights is what the fight for African American rights were, civil rights and human freedom. Gays are TEN% of the US population. African Americans are almost NINE%. The time has come to give the equality that is so long overdue.” (male)

Although both males and females explicitly rejected the comparisons with previous integration efforts, males were proportionally more likely to say “it’s not the same,” often expressing the belief that homosexuality is a behavioral choice:

- “This is nowhere in the same category as race or religion, and am concerned that some consider this in that manner.” (male)
- “It is not accurate to compare this with the racial integration of the military--since this involves a behavior not an identity and since it strikes at values that are deeply-held by a significant portion of the force. Unlike the civilian world, the military often involves ‘forced community’; so, in effect, we would be compelling Service members to accept the homosexual lifestyle.” (male)
- “As an African American female, I am insulted to the comparison on homosexuality to my birth given right. I did not choose to be black or female. However, a person cho[o]ses their religion or sexuality. I strongly believe homosexuality is a choice one makes.” (female)
- “This is not the same type of de-segregation as w/blacks and whites, males and females as these are traits that you are born with. Being gay is a choice/preference or trait that is picked up through[h]out one’s life.” (female)

4.7 Implementation of Repeal

4.7.1 Policies and Guidelines

4.7.1.1 Clear Written and Enforced Policies and Guidelines

Male and female Service members agreed on the imperative for the military to present clear policies and guidelines if DADT is repealed. Correspondents of both genders argued that many, if not most, of the implementation issues could be addressed by firm and equitable enforcement of already existing policies and rules:

- “We are all professionals, and those of us who are not are weeded out, even if some take longer than others. We have clear standards presented to us in basic training, and each day at the workplace. There are sexual harassment laws that have been established as well as laws that expect us to be accepting of diversity.” (female)
- “I have served faithfully for 25.5 years...I believe it is time to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” As long as there are regulations, I believe everyone will continue to adhere to the rules. If rules are broken then anyone who breaks them should be held accountable ... straight or gay!” (male)
- “I have no personal issues with gays being in the military. I think they should receive the same treatment as all other Service members, if they are caught performing sexual acts in the barracks punish them the same way.” (male)
- “We have all the necessary policies in place to control this issue. Our leadership just needs to work harder to enforce dress and appearance, professionalism and sexual harassment policies.” (female)

Female Service members more often expressed the view that effective implementation would require not just ordinary enforcement, but also clarification of unclear or vague policies and regulations, as well as special vigilance to ensure that gays and lesbians do not suffer backlash:

- “If we allow gays to serve openly in the military my concern and heartache would be with the policy itself. Often times the military regulations are vague, subjective and leave open for interpretation as to how to handle certain situations.” (female)
- “We must ensure we are ready for this change with the necessary policies and practices to provide a safe, tolerant, supportive environment for all who serve.” (female)
- “If this law is repealed in the near future, I think the services really need to be vigilant & proactive to ensure that the gay/lesbians do not suffer undo discrimination/isolation.” (female)

- “I firmly believe that it is time to openly welcome all U.S. citizens to support and defend their country. It will be important to provide strict guidance of acceptable behavior, attitudes, etc. for all members in the military and to enforce with a zero tolerance policy similar to current EO policies.” (female)

4.7.2 Revision to Specific Policies and Guidelines

4.7.2.1 Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Complaints

Female and male correspondents alike commented on the need for equal treatment of all if repeal were to occur, with no special prerogatives granted to gays and lesbians. Several predicted that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would be likely to escalate the number of discrimination complaints being filed:

- “Will ‘gay’ become the new minority and wind up being given special privileges to avoid discrimination suits?” (female)
- “Letting them serve openly will only lead to them being harassed and ridiculed in front of their peers. This is an EO and IG complaint in the making not to mention equal rights lawsuits.” (female)
- “The biggest reason for keeping the current policy is that...any time a person, who is known to be gay or lesbian, gets a poor evaluation or fitrep, not selected for a program or any other similar situation will use their sexual preference to their benefit. EO already has enough to deal with. What’s next? Making selection quotas for Gays and Lesbians?” (male)
- “I know in my unit the words “fag”, “queer” are used between Marines in a teasing manner. What happens when an individual comes to the unit that is in fact a homosexual and is offended by these phrases? EO reps will get phone calls and good Marines will get burned because the command will have no choice but to address it.” (male)

4.7.2.2 Fraternization

Among the relatively small number of correspondents who commented on this issue, both males and females said it would be contradictory to allow gay Service members to engage in certain behaviors while prohibiting heterosexual Service members from doing the same:

- “While this policy (USAFCENT General Order 1B paragraph 2.n.) currently prohibits even married couples from entering each other’s rooms to even talk or watch a movie together, it would do nothing to prevent a gay person from entering their partner’s room. I think a lot of animosity will develop if this regulation is not removed entirely, or changed somehow to also forbid same-sex couples from entering the other’s sleeping quarters.” (male)
- “The only thing that I would change is the discharge policy. I think that it should be run just the same as if someone were caught fraternizing. Counseling and then increased discipline as needed if the indiscretions continue.” (female)
- “If a gay member should try to use rank or authority for special/sexual favors it should not be treated any differently than if that person were straight. No fraternization, period.” (female)

4.7.2.3 Rules for Sexual Conduct and Public Displays of Affection (PDAs)

Following the same line of reasoning as for fraternization, male and female Service members alike argued that it would be critical to enforce strict adherence to uniform standards of behavior if repeal does occur. As illustrated in the second quote below, many correspondents, regardless of gender, said they felt uncomfortable at the prospect of witnessing public displays of affection between homosexual individuals:

- “[the military should] Acknowledge that inappropriate work relationships of any combination are inappropriate and destructive not because of the [sexual] orientation, but because it doesn’t belong at work. A couple of men or a couple of women or a man and a woman should be disciplined the same way for breaking that rule.” (male)
- “I believe the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ law should not be totally repealed but rather amended. An amendment could include a statement that allows homosexuals to serve openly without retribution against their career or physical body but NEVER DISPLAY PUBLIC ACTS OF HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY (hugging, kissing, hand holding, etc.).” (female)

4.7.3 Housing/Berthing/Billeting and Showers

Both males and females voiced concerns about heterosexual and gay or lesbian Service members sharing living quarters and showers. Regardless of their position on repeal, some female correspondents said repeal of DADT would necessitate the creation of separate living and/or

bathing facilities, or at the very least, modifications to current facilities. They often compared the situation to that of rooming or showering with someone of the opposite sex:

- “I am extremely uncomfortable with living in the same quarters as homosexuals, the same way I would be uncomfortable living with men in the same quarters. I believe it is completely against a human’s right to ban someone based on their sexuality however as we should not push our beliefs down their throats, they should not do the same to us. They need to have their own living arrangements provided the same way males are separated from females.” (female)
- “If you are going to be allowed to tell people openly what sex you prefer then I think it all needs to be separated when it comes to showers/restrooms. I think the policy was perfectly fine with the way that it was. It needs to be equal opportunity, so if you are straight then do you get to use the same shower/restroom w/the opposite gender? Don’t ask don’t tell!” (female)
- We as the supervising leadership will have an obligation to see to it that same gendered Marines with concerns for their own privacy feel as comfortable as possible with the living, and hygiene arrangements. This will require some level of facilities modification.” (female)

Some correspondents also worried that under repeal they might be the object of unwanted sexual attention or advances:

- “We are going to have to sleep next to someone, shower next to someone whom may be checking us out. With the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’, we don’t know who they are and we don’t have to be cautious.” (female)
- “Should someone of a homosexual or bisexual nature be cohorted with same sex heterosexuals, it would create a potentially negative environment for all parties concerned and could potentially be a catalyst for unwanted sexual harassment or other types of unwelcome and unwanted behaviors (hate crimes, slander, discrimination for a person’s sexual orientation, etc.).” (female)

Following the previous discussion about the potential discrimination complaints, some correspondents mentioned the possibility of heterosexual Service members reacting to perceived unwanted sexual advances with sexual harassment claims or violence.

Other Service members, both male and female, opposed the creation of separate living or showering facilities as impractical and likely to compound the problem by effectively segregating unit members from one another:

- “You cannot have billeting for homosexual males/females and not expect it to degrade professional relationships.” (female)
- “We cannot segregate dormitories between homosexuals and heterosexuals, that would further the problem by creating shame and segregation.” (female)
- “I recommend not trying to make segregated facilities. You’d end up with straight men’s heads, gay men’s heads, bisexual men’s heads, plus the female counterparts. My sub doesn’t have room for 6 different types of bunkrooms and heads.” (male)

Other correspondents, mainly females, also expressed concerns about the practicality, cost, and logistics of constructing separate facilities or adapting existing facilities to house gay and lesbian Service members:

- “Right now most barracks are filled to max capacity and a homosexual person would need a room to themselves.” (female)
- “The Air Force doesn’t have the money to honor the enlistment and commissioning agreements that they entered, and are sending good Airmen out the door; does the Air Force have the money to build the facilities that will be required if gays serve openly?” (female)

Finally, heterosexual Service members indicated the potential unfairness of allowing gays and lesbians to share living quarters while they are restricted from doing the same with their spouses or significant others:

- “I am married to a military member and we were deployed together to AUAB and we were not allowed in each other’s sleeping quarters under any circumstances. How is it fair to allow homosexual members into the military and live under the same conditions? You cannot single them out and give them separate quarters.” (male)
- “If a female is homosexual, it would be contradicting to allow her to have the same quarters with another female, but yet, I cannot share quarters with my legally married husband.” (female)

4.7.4 Benefits for Partners of Gay/Lesbian Service Members

Both males and females commented on the possible extension of benefits to the partners of homosexual Service members, although such comments were far more likely to come from females. Some raised questions about the status of gay and lesbian Service members residing in states that recognize same-sex marriage:

- “If a homosexual military member is stationed in a state that recognizes legal gay marriage and decides to get married w/in that state, will that marriage be recognized in the Military as well? For example, Washington DC now recognizes gay marriage. Members who are local residents and stationed at Bolling AFB will be required to pay Washington DC taxes, at that time, I am sure they will be claiming their spouse as a dependant. Will these members be able to claim their spouse as a dependent through the military as well and draw w/dependant pay?...will they be able to utilize military spouse entitlements (i.e., dependant ID card, base access, PCS authorization, Base Housing etc.)?”(female)
- “Will adjustments to forms be made for these members living with their partners? Especially, when [same sex] marriage is something that has not been widely accepted by our society and is illegal in many areas; will exceptions be made to these members allowing their partners to benefit from the services provided to our spouses (i.e., joint spouse, Tri care, separation pay, etc)”(female)

Some female and male correspondents argued that if DADT is repealed, the military should eliminate disparities between gay and lesbian and heterosexual Service members by recognizing and offering benefits to their partners and families:

- “Spouses of SVMs get a myriad of benefits, from healthcare, employment preferences, family support services, college tuition assistance, tax free shopping, life insurance and death gratuity (God forbid)....a gay SVM’s partner enjoys none of those things.” (female)
- “The way the family is recognized and supported is through the benefits that a military member receives: dental, health, life insurance, etc.” (female)
- “Education will be the key to increasing acceptance of same sex couples in the military, and establishing/preserving their access to family health benefits, joint spouse assignments, and equal housing opportunities.” (male)

Finally, a few correspondents of both genders questioned the fairness of potentially allowing the partners of gay Service members to receive military spousal benefits while unmarried partners of heterosexuals do not:

- “...I would have a problem giving their partners benefits. That would not be fair to heterosexuals who have live-in boyfriends and don’t get benefits.” (female)
- “If this occurs and homosexuals are allowed to claim their partners for BAH and other military benefits, then why shouldn’t single soldiers who are dating be allowed to claim their girlfriends?” (male)

4.7.5 Leadership

According to both female and male correspondents, if repeal is to be effective, leaders will need to set the stage “from the top down” by providing clear guidance and embodying an example for other Service members to follow.

- “[What is needed is] more training to reinforce the concept of allowing them [gays and lesbians] to serve and more consequences for those who create problems. It must be embraced from the top down to destroy the old barriers.” (female)
- “There are certain cultural changes that need to take place in order for the change to be successful, but this can be handled by leadership within the service.” (female)
- “...as a proud Service Member, I am obligated to adhere to whatever rules and/or regulations our leadership deems appropriate.” (male)

4.7.6 Process of Implementation

Both males and females commented that the success of repeal will hinge on careful planning and execution:

- “Getting rid of the ‘Don’t ask, Don’t tell’ policy will work, if just as much effort and training as with sexual harassment and equal opportunity is put into effect.” (female)
- “This is an ‘organize, train, and equip’ issue, and should be dealt with as such.” (male)

Females especially emphasized the need for education and training to facilitate the process and instruct Service members about the new rules, regulations and policies being put in place.

- “I teach enlisted PME and have had this discussion many times with my students during the one lesson that addresses the DOD policy on homosexuality. It seems the majority of males are worried about another man hitting on them. With the right training, gay men and women could be easily integrated. The homophobes just need to be taught what to expect, what’s acceptable and unacceptable behavior.” (female)
- “I ask that special briefs be presented/provided that provide as much info about what the repeal does and does not mean, that no one is to do bodily harm to another, and to especially help with workplace atmosphere and subsequent questions/concerns.” (female)
- “Education and exposure are the tools needed to create acceptance and understanding of the great uniqueness that everyone provides.” (female)

However, not all correspondents were as sanguine about the larger value of these efforts. A few Service members, both male and female, who opposed repeal questioned the time and cost burdens to the military of such training and educational programs.

4.8 Phase 2 Inbox Comment Analysis

As noted previously, the first round of inbox comments was drawn from the last two weeks in April and the months of May and June. As shown in Table 4-1, these early comments heavily reflected the perspectives of Army and Air Force personnel, but not those of the other three Services. For the second phase of our analysis we sought to create a 1,500-case database (when comments from both phases were merged) that would balance the voices as evenly as possible across all five Services. Because there was low representation from the U.S. Coast Guard in both rounds, we included all comments received from Service members in the Coast Guard (225), and for each of the remaining four services, we selected a total of 320 comments, for a combined total of 1,505 comments.

Table 4-1. Phase 2: Distribution of Comments by Service

Service	Phase 1	Phase 2			COMBINED TOTAL
	(April, May, and June)	July	August	Round 2 Total	
Air Force	249	35	36	71	320
Army	143	88	89	177	320
Coast Guard	11	23	191	214	225
Marine Corps	96	104	120	224	320
Navy	47	136	137	273	320
Total	546	394	565	959	1,505

Team members coded the Phase 2 data using the earlier coding scheme, with one new code added for cases where the correspondent wrote about “good order and discipline.” Once coding was completed on this second set of comments, Phases 1 and 2 were combined to create a final, merged database.

While we purposively selected for branch of Service, we did not select on other factors such as gender or rank. The distribution of comments by gender and Service is shown in Table 4-2; Table 4-3 presents the distribution of comments by Pay Grade group.

Table 4-2. Distribution of Phase 2 Inbox Comments by Gender and Service

Gender	Air Force	Army	Coast Guard	Marine Corps	Navy	Grand Total
Female	187	113	64	84	88	536
Male	133	207	161	236	232	969
Grand Total	320	320	225	320	320	1,505

Table 4-3. Distribution of Phase 2 Inbox Comments by Pay Grade Group

Pay Grade Group	Total
E1 – E3	143
E4 – E6	687
E7 – E9	271
O1 – O3	163
O4 – O6	199
O7 – O10	11
W01 – W05	31
Grand Total	1,505

4.8.1 Phase 2 Findings

In analyzing the full set of 1,505 inbox comments, no issues or concerns emerged that had not already been identified in the Phase I analysis, or in our analyses of the IEFs, Leadership Discussion Groups, and Focus Groups. We thus examined the topics most frequently raised by correspondents to determine if there were differences in how these issues were expressed by correspondent Service or pay grade.

4.8.1.1 Religious Beliefs and Values

As in Phase 1, these comments generally reflected the correspondent’s belief in the “immorality” of the gay lifestyle, and that allowing gays and lesbians to serve in the military would be an affront to military members’ deeply held religious tenets. Only a relatively small number of correspondents suggested that religion should have no voice in determining whether or not gays and lesbians can honorably serve their country. Approximately 80 percent of these comments came from correspondents from the Air Force, Army, and Marines (in about equal proportions); Navy correspondents accounted for most of the remaining 20 percent. Proportional to their

representation in the sample, Service members in the pay grade groups E7-E9, O1-O3, and O4-O6 commented most frequently about their religious concerns with respect to a potential repeal of DADT. E1-E3 and E4-E6 correspondents were much less likely to write in about this issue (only about 6% of each group).

4.8.1.2 Distraction

These comments reflected correspondents' concerns about repeal either distracting soldiers from their need to concentrate on the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, or being a financial distraction for a military which is perceived to be under-funded for the missions it is currently undertaking. Marines wrote about this issue proportionally more frequently than did correspondents from the other Services, but there were otherwise no differences by Service or by rank.

4.8.1.3 Military Values

Correspondents also wrote quite often about how they saw repeal as it related to military values. Opinions were divided, with slightly more than half of the comments reflecting the perception that the presence of gays and lesbians is contrary to military values. The remaining writers said that by forcing gays and lesbians to lie about their sexual orientation, the military was requiring one set of Service members to violate the core military values of honesty and integrity. When examined by Service, however, only among Marine and Army correspondents did the former perceptions outnumber the latter; the trend was reversed for Air Force and Navy correspondents, and Coast Guard writers were evenly divided between the two positions.

4.8.1.4 Privacy

The largest number of inbox comments reflected Service members' concerns about adequate privacy in housing, toilets, and showers. A careful review of these data revealed no meaningful differences by Service or pay grade group.

4.8.1.5 Comparison with Previous Integration Efforts

As we saw with Phase I, some correspondents analogized repeal of DADT with past efforts to integrate African Americans and women into the military, while others argued that the comparison does not hold because being gay is a “choice.” In the Phase 2 assessment, we found that more correspondents across all five Services and all pay grade groups offered comments to support the position that repeal “is the same” as these past efforts. The sole exception was for the O4-O6 category, whose comments were equally divided between the two positions.

4.8.1.6 Gays and Lesbians Are Here Now

While acknowledging the current presence of gays and lesbians in the Service, some correspondents thought repeal was a bad idea because they are more comfortable suspecting rather than knowing for sure that a fellow Service member is gay or lesbian. Others suggested that since gays are already serving in the military and, in many instances, “we already know,” there is no reason to prohibit these individuals from serving openly without fear of being discharged.

In the Phase 2 analysis for this code, we again found a pattern of difference across Service: Marines were proportionally more likely to say they would be uncomfortable actually knowing the sexual orientation of other Marines, Air Force members were evenly split between the two positions, and members of the three remaining Services—the Army, the Navy, and the Coast Guard—noted that because they knew they were already serving with gays and lesbians, they strongly favored repeal.

A review of these same data by rank also presented some notable patterns: Among E4-E6, E7-E9, and all classes of Warrant Officers, correspondents were proportionally more likely to say they were against repeal because they “preferred not to know.” Among all other ranks, however, proportionally more correspondents favored repeal and cited the fact that the Services are already effectively integrated by sexual orientation.

4.8.1.7 Timing: Why Now or Why Not Now

Some correspondents pointed to current war efforts and asked: Why repeal this law now? Others stated firmly that it is time law is taken off the books. The Phase 2 analysis revealed that with the exception of Marines, who tended to ask, “Why now?,” all other Service members were

proportionally more likely to state that the time has come to repeal the law. When we look at how the data break down by pay grade group, E7-E9 correspondents were split between the two codes, while correspondents from all other pay grade groups were more likely to take the position that the time has come.

4.8.1.8 Unit Cohesion – Overall Cohesion versus Task Cohesion

For Phase II, the comprehensive coding structure contained three associated codes pertaining directly or indirectly to unit cohesion: overall impact (general statements about the impact of repeal); overall cohesion (explicit statements of the perceived effect of repeal on unit cohesion); and “good order and discipline,” which was added to the coding structure to reflect the military “atmosphere” or “tone” within a unit. We also coded these comments according to the Service member’s perception of the overall direction of the impact of repeal (positive, no change, or negative).

Our analyses revealed differences by Service: Correspondents from the Air Force were evenly divided between those who thought repeal would have a negative or positive effect. Comments from all other Services, however, strongly indicated the belief that repeal would negatively affect the overall cohesion of the unit. When we looked at these same data broken down by pay grade group, we found the same pattern: across all pay grade groups, proportionally more comments indicated a belief that repeal would have a negative effect on the unit’s cohesion or ability to maintain good order and discipline.

But when we examined comments about task cohesion, or the ability of the unit to work together to accomplish its mission, a strikingly different pattern emerged. With the exception of the Marines and members of the Coast Guard, correspondents from the Army, Navy and Air Force were proportionally more likely to say that repeal would either have a positive effect or no effect on the unit’s ability to get the job done. Among pay grade groups, E1-E3 and O1-O3 correspondents were slightly more likely to believe that task cohesion would be negatively affected by repeal, while Service members from all other pay grade groups were much more likely to say that repeal either would not change the unit’s ability to complete its mission, or, less often, would have a positive effect on task cohesion.

4.9 Summary of Findings

From our Phase I analysis, we found that males and females stand on both sides of the debate. Female correspondents express concerns about showering and housing in terms nearly identical to those used by males; they were equally likely to say that the discussion about repeal was ill-timed; and they were more likely to express concerns about having to serve alongside “open” or “flamboyant” gays. Those findings notwithstanding, our analysis also suggests that, as a group, the females in our sample were more likely to express a cluster of views favorable to repeal, believing that after a “period of adjustment” the military will emerge the stronger and the better for it. They were more apt to see repeal as a matter of civil rights, think the military should be setting an example by getting ahead of civilian society, and to argue that repeal of DADT will be comparable to past efforts to integrate women and African Americans. Females also offered more comments on the likely positive effects of repeal in lessening stress on gay and lesbian Service members and their families, allowing them to serve their country and yet be true to core military values of honesty and integrity. Finally, females more often argued that effective implementation of DADT will require going the extra mile beyond “ordinary enforcement” and emphasized the value of education and training in facilitating the process. Thus, gender alone cannot be considered predictive of whether an individual talked about repeal in positive or negative terms, but on the whole, females were more likely to take a positive stance on the issue.

Our Phase 2 analysis adds several important findings to the mix, particularly with respect to differences in views of repeal by Service. First, for the selected codes, the overall picture was remarkably balanced in views of repeal; if anything, it revealed a tendency to favor repeal. Second, we did find some suggestion of differences by Service: Marines and correspondents from the Army were more likely than correspondents from the other Services to express concerns about the timing and likely negative impact of repeal. We also found some minor differences by pay grade group, with more senior-level Service members expressing concerns about the potential for repeal to have a negative impact on the military. The implications of these and other findings from all the qualitative datasets will be examined in the final and concluding chapter, Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 5. FAMILY IEFs/DGS/FOCUS GROUPS

5.1 Introduction and Overview

This chapter presents findings from all engagements with family members and/or Family Readiness Group leaders/volunteers beginning with Colorado and continuing through the European engagements. As shown in the table below, this represents a total of 12 Family IEF discussions, 9 Leadership Discussion Groups, and 7 Focus Groups.

Location	Date	Family Focus Groups	Family IEFs	Service Member IEFs with Spouses Attending ⁹	Discussion Groups
Camp Lejeune, NC	April 28	0	1	0	0
Southern California	May 24-27	0	3	0	1
Colorado	June 15-17	2	2	0	0
Georgia/South Carolina	July 6-8	0	0	0	0
Hawaii*	July 11-17	3	3	0	0
Japan	August 1-6	2	0	3	3
Little Rock, AR	August 12-14	0	0	0	1
Europe	August 12-21	0	3	1	4
Totals		7	12	4	9

* In Hawaii, 2 Family Focus Groups and 1 Family IEF were cancelled because of a lack of participants.

While in the previous chapters we separated our analyses of Focus Groups from the other two types of engagements, in this chapter all three formats have been combined. The reasoning behind this is threefold: First, our review of the data suggests that regardless of the scheduled format, the issues raised by participants were similar across the different group types. Second, lean attendance at some of the scheduled Information Exchange Forums ultimately changed the character of these groups. Often, fewer than 15 individuals were in attendance (sometimes as few as 3), resulting in a dialogue between participants that closely resembled the interchange more typical of a Leadership Discussion Group. Finally, because there were so few discussions with family members in the overall engagement process, we believe it important to analyze these data as a single set and present the findings accordingly.

⁹ This group of Information Exchange Forms (IEFs) was planned for Service members but some spouses also attended. Any input attributed to the spouse of a Service member was considered during analysis.

5.2 Findings

Our analysis of family discussions revealed that, on the whole, participants believed repeal of DADT would be beneficial to the military and its personnel. Certainly this was not a unanimous position. In almost all groups, at least one individual expressed his/her misgivings about repeal; and in a few groups, those who believed repeal would have negative effects were in the majority. Nevertheless, when compared with the opinions expressed during engagements with Service members (which leaned towards the negative), the positions offered by spouses and family members took a decidedly favorable tone. In addition, and perhaps because of their stance that “we need to make this work,” many family members offered excellent implementation suggestions for the military to consider.

5.2.1 Overview

In the following pages, we discuss the key issues raised during the IEFs or Discussion Groups and/or introduced by the moderator during the Focus Groups.¹⁰ For each issue, we present illustrative examples of both sets of opinions: family members who wanted DADT “dealt with and wiped off the books completely,” and those who had concerns about the possible negative impacts of repeal.

The two positions are not as simple as one side disagreeing with the other; rather, the divergence of opinion lays bare the foundations of both support for and opposition to gays and lesbians in the military. Those who believed repeal would be positive often took an empathetic position and considered how things might look from the perspective of the gay or lesbian partner of a military member. Generally their comments suggested that there was little other than sexual orientation that made their families different from their gay counterparts'. For example, in one focus group when the moderator asked if gays or lesbians would be included in Family Readiness Groups, one person said simply, “They’re going to miss their family, too.” And when discussing whether gay partners should be notified as next of kin if something were to happen to the military spouse, one woman responded, “If I was gay, then I would want them notified and by my side.” Finally, in an Information Exchange Forum, a participant commented on how important it is to a soldier’s

¹⁰ There are a few issues from the Family Focus Group script that are not discussed in this report primarily because participants had very little to say on the matters. For example, family members were asked how repeal might affect their spouses’ willingness to stay in the military (retention). With the exception of perhaps two or three individuals, family members said repeal would have no effect on their spouses’ plans for staying in the military. Other issues (e.g., recruitment, recommendations) were similarly unremarkable and thus are not presented here.

effectiveness to know that his/her family is being taken care of, regardless of the sexual orientation of the soldier:

- “BHA [provides] financial security for the soldier. When they know their family is taken care of, they execute effectively. Not having this [for gay couples] is obviously a divider; [and] the family won’t have the same support if the partner wasn’t invited [to Family Readiness Groups].”

Throughout the discussions, those participants who favored repeal discussed the need to ensure that gay partners and their children are eligible for the same package of benefits as heterosexual married couples. In fact—if not in law, they said—these families are just like ours.

Family members who had misgivings about repeal talked about gays and lesbians quite differently, often describing them as “the Other.” These individuals are not at all like me and my family, they said. The homosexual lifestyle greatly impinges on our beliefs and values and my family members’ civil rights:

- “If I say I don’t believe in homosexuals, [now] it’s hate speak. ...My values are being stripped away.”
- “Why are we so concerned with giving freedom to one sect of a group and giving them all these rights? The heterosexual Marine is going to lose his own rights.”
- “Society does what they want...and I can’t control them. [But] I want to make sure my rights as a citizen aren’t imposed on more.... They can’t say this behavior is ok. How can they have that freedom?”

One woman expressed her concerns about how SOFA statutes with respect to gays and lesbians might affect where her spouse—and, by extension, she and her children—gets deployed:

- “I’m concerned that if my husband was in line looking at a job that was available in Hawaii or Azerbaijan and we were in line with a gay Service member and his partner for the same position. Since Azerbaijan is not a country that would accept the gay couple and Hawaii, in the U.S., is one of those places, would they be assigned to the more desirable location because they’re not welcome at the other? Decisions like that affect my family.”

This was an important comment, reflecting the reality that the United States military is one large, integrated system: a push on one piece of the system (e.g., who is recognized as a military spouse) invariably creates a pull somewhere else. Individuals who expressed concerns about repeal frequently mentioned how that “pull” would affect themselves and their families.

5.2.2 Children

These groups offered important insights into how family members felt repeal would affect their children.

5.2.2.1 Perceived Benefits of Repeal

Family members who believed repeal would have positive effects commented on the benefits both with respect to their own children as well as other children in the community. Some expressed the belief that this young generation already has plenty of familiarity with gays and lesbians, and did not see how integrating gays and lesbians into the military would expose these youth to something unknown:

- “There was a child in my class that had two moms. ...You’re naïve to believe that your kid will go to a DoD school and you won’t be exposed to it. And that was just one child out of 20.”
- “I don’t think any of us here have control over what the next generation is going to bring. They’re more accepting and everyone eventually will accept it or move on. ...I have children that are college age and they’re okay with it. That’s just how it is.”
- “From a family point of view, I think kids are adaptable and willing to work with it. They know what they like and what they don’t like.”
- “It’s a lot of hypocrisy when it comes to things like that. [Parents who are opposed] allow their kids to play videogames and watch the things on TV so they’re already exposed to it anyway. I think they say things like that when they’re in public, but the truth is their kids are watching it on TV anyway!”

Others spoke about how repeal would be validating for those youth who might be coming to terms with their own sexual identity. Two parents noted that because of DADT, teenagers at one school were not allowed to start a GLBT group. Another said:

- “I’ve been very concerned about the gay children growing up on these bases because right now it’s not the kind of environment where they can be themselves. I think the policy change might be a benefit for children who are feeling ‘there might be something different about me.’”

5.2.2.2 Perceived Negative Effects

Individuals who were concerned about repeal raised several issues with respect to their children, not least of which was how repeal might expose their children to a lifestyle with which they do not agree:

- “It would severely impact my family. I have made tough decisions for mine. I choose carefully how and what they are told. ...We don’t accept dinner [invitations] to a gay or lesbian [household], or a heterosexual couple who are not married. ...If a command function comes up [with gays present], I will not be bringing my children. My children won’t do sports. I won’t expose them to it. As it would happen [if repeal gets implemented] my family would slowly move away from base activities.”
- “Why does it have to be put down my throat? I do not have children and if [when] I do have children, I do not want them raised next to a gay couple. I have strong moral values against homosexuality and I do not want it forced on me.”
- “You have functions at your home, you bring the unit and their spouses and you have your children at home. It would expose our children earlier than we’d like to have them exposed. ...even though I will teach my children about it and my viewpoint, I want to be able to teach it in an appropriate way at the right time.”
- “As a mother of three sons, I can say they look up to soldiers—GI Joe. When there are welcome ceremonies and GI Joe goes out and kisses his partner, my 5 year old is going to say, ‘What’s up with that, Mom?’ And that is not something that I really want to expose him to.”

An additional point, though not expressed as frequently, was concern about their children’s safety:

- “When my husband is deployed, I really depend on the community for support for me and my children. I read that a homosexual relationship has a 2-3 times greater rate of being dissolved. I usually don’t get to choose where I get to live. Like the gay and lesbian medical association reports higher drug use and the National Institute of Justice says there is a higher rate of domestic abuse in homosexual relationships. I’m concerned for my family’s safety if DADT is repealed.”

5.2.2.3 Children – Implementation Suggestions

Regardless of their positions on the issue, family members often spoke about the importance of providing educational and training materials for parents, children, and even the teachers at the DoD schools. One parent encouraged the CRWG to review materials that might be available in the public education system:

- “The educational material is out there. The support is out there. It is just a matter of tapping into that. ...From my background with 21 years in child and youth, we [military] do not have those materials... Being in the military, we’re rigorous about training when something is new. ... What is the best way as parents to gain this training? Can we gain expertise by looking at what civilians have done with this?”

Some family members who wanted DADT to remain in place, however, suggested that they would take appropriate steps to ensure their “rights as parents [would not] be infringed upon.” One woman indicated that she would not permit her children to participate in certain sexual education curricula; and another said that she would home-school her children, if necessary, so that she could raise them the way she wanted to.

5.2.3 Spouses

In the focus groups, participants were asked how they believed repeal might affect their spouses. The issue also came up on its own during Information Exchange Forums.

5.2.3.1 Perceived Benefits of Repeal

Spouses who expressed the belief that integration of gays and lesbians would be positive for the military said they felt their spouses’ stress levels would be reduced if DADT were repealed:

- “It would make him happier and like the world is a better place if it was repealed. It would decrease his stress level at work. [Described situation where soldier was making harassing statements to another soldier. Spouse unsure how to address the issue.] “If DADT is repealed, he’s going to feel a lot better. And he will be more justified in asking people to back off, instead of having to defend people all the time, [which is] what he does now. ...There wouldn’t be any questions about whether he could stop the guy...”
- If my husband could do less work because more people would be attracted to the military, then heck, yeah, I want them to repeal it.”

They also talked about how repeal might increase the relative safety of their spouses who were deployed to combat zones, as exemplified by the following comment:

- “What I care about is, if my husband comes home safe to me. So many people have been discharged under that policy, like intelligence officers and linguists. It is so important to me and I want to know he is as protected as he can be.”

5.2.3.2 Perceived Negative Effects

Participants who expressed concern about repeal also talked about how it might affect the safety of spouses who were deployed, although most seemed to describe repeal as having an *indirect* effect. Particular concerns included resources directed towards implementing repeal that might otherwise have been spent on protective armor and ordnance; their spouses’ need to deal with the fallout of implementation, which would be a “distraction” from the main mission; and a perceived overall breakdown in unit readiness because of the presence of a known gay or lesbian soldier. Importantly, none of these participants suggested that their spouses would be in danger because gay soldiers would be less capable of performing the tasks assigned to them.

The most consistently expressed concern was that repeal would greatly increase stress on their loved ones, many of whom were already being asked to carry a heavy load:

- “Seeing the stresses as being the spouse of a senior leader, you can see the stress wearing on them. How can you add one more thing onto their plate? ...With the economy the way it is right now, they’re so busy they’re always on the go. I think we need to make sure we look at that. You can’t be a good leader if you’re falling apart.”
- “You’ve got a whole new set of rules, increased work load, you’re going to have a separate entity and it brings something new to readiness. The workload will increase. The Blackberry is going to ‘burn up’.”
- “My husband is a first sergeant and there will be that increased strain on him.”
- “They are already dealing with the horrors of war; they shouldn’t have to deal with that [effects of repeal], too.”

5.2.3.3 Spouses – Implementation Suggestions

All participants, regardless of their feelings about a potential repeal of DADT, felt that the most important thing would be to ensure that their spouses had good training about the policies and how they should be enforced, as well as the strong backing of their leadership:

- “The leadership needs to be proactive and communicative, provide resources and information. There needs to be consequences for improper behavior.”

Participants offered no other suggestions for steps the military might take to ensure that repeal would have minimal adverse effects on their spouses.

5.2.4 Extension of Benefits

Despite unambiguous comments from group leaders and moderators that DOMA limits the kinds of benefits same sex families can receive through the military, participants spoke frequently about what benefits these couples might receive and what the resulting impact might be.

5.2.4.1 Perceived Benefits of Repeal

The majority of family participants seemed to view the extension of benefits to same sex couples and their children as a simple matter of justice. Their comments often reflected the speakers’ perception—sometimes spoken, sometimes implicit—that the only way in which a gay family differs from their own is that gay families are headed by two adults of the same gender. If the military is going to acknowledge that gays and lesbians are not only serving but serving honorably, they said, what sense does it make to not extend military benefits to their families?

- “I think if they’re giving up their lives as we are, they should get benefits.”
- “I do not see how we can out them in the military and say we can’t offer them the same benefits.”
- “What is really changing [with repeal]? I understand the basics, but if I were to look at it from a gay or lesbian perspective, part of rights and freedoms are to have the same benefits that anyone else has. Why is it not going hand in hand? I’m allowed to serve openly and have a partner, but my partner can’t live with me or have access to the commissary?”

- “My concern is that these families are not given the same benefits and attention. We should see if both parents of a child from a same sex couple are on the birth certificate¹¹ so they can get the same benefits and rights.”
- “We’ll be saying, ‘Okay, you can come in, but you can’t get married, you can’t get benefits, etc.’ You’re really putting people in a bind.... [CRWG Leader: “*Well we can’t go all the way.*.”] Yes, so what is the benefit of inching in? There are Service members who can get discouraged.”

A related concern was what happens to a family when the gay military member is deployed overseas or sent to another location stateside. The consensus was that if the soldier’s partnership status is not being recognized by the military, that individual’s family will be put in an untenable position:

- “If someone gets an overseas assignment, can the spouse go overseas or do we have to split families apart? Somebody could potentially not want to be deployed if their family could not go. Even if we don’t recognize the family structure, they are a family structure. What are we doing for the children?”
- “If you have a homosexual couple here [in Italy] and that spouse is not being recognized as a spouse, the spouse cannot get access to the base or medical. We need to figure out how to take care of this spouse as well. Until we figure out what benefits they would receive, I would be hesitant to send them over here.”
- “As we integrate homosexuals, if we have a child who has a special condition, we don’t send them to certain places because we don’t have the facilities to take care of them. If you put a family like that over here in a community like this [Ramstein], if they are not able to use housing or the commissary it would be difficult to function.”

These individuals also talked about the need to ensure that gay and lesbian couples and their children would be eligible for base housing. One participant in Hawaii suggested that base housing legally cannot be restricted to heterosexual couples:

- “They could establish a new contract for base housing because it is a public and private venture that the private industry may have influence in. I currently live in a military housing community and there is a family that lives there that is not military. It is because after 30 days if a military family does not move in there they have to offer it to anyone.”

Another person spoke about how integrated housing would expose her children to “diversity in the community,” while another indicated that diverse family structures are part of the “real world”:

- “For that one guy who stood up in the [IEF] and mentioned that he didn’t want a homosexual couple living next door to him, I say that could happen in any

¹¹ It should be noted that even in states where gay marriages are recognized, the non-birth parent is still required to formally adopt the couple’s child, i.e., having both parents’ names on the child’s birth certificate is not sufficient for the extension of rights and benefits.

neighborhood across America. Anyone can buy a house next to you. I suggest to him that he needn't get all worked up about it."

5.2.4.2 Perceived Negative Effects

Participants expressed several concerns related to same sex couples receiving the same benefits as heterosexual couples, with base housing being a particular concern. First, as noted earlier, they were concerned about their children being exposed to homosexuality if a gay or lesbian couple were to move into the community. In addition, in one of the Hawaii groups, the three women who lived on base talked about how a gay couple's presence would affect neighborhood cohesion:

- *Participant 1:* "Whoever lives on base is assigned a house and someone is assigned a house who lives next door to me. In military communities, there is more interaction between communities. The issue will be more 'right there' if you are living on base."

Participant 2: "There is an expectation that your neighbor on base is not having an affair with someone. Everyone is safe in that level of conduct. On bases you know you are not going to have to deal with [gays and lesbians]."

Participant 3: "You want cohesion with your neighbor, amongst the families."

More generally, however, participants believed that because same sex couples' unions are not recognized by the Federal government, gay couples simply should not be entitled to receive these benefits. This is a consistent application of the standard, they said, because a girlfriend similarly would not be entitled to her boyfriend's benefits:

- "I do not like the next of kin notification the way it is set up with females. If a single Marine has a girlfriend in the military then she is not notified. ...If it is one way for heterosexuals then that is the way it should be. I do not feel like [there should be] special exceptions."
- "I do not think benefits should apply to couples that are not married. Some states do not recognize [gay marriage]...DOMA is in effect. I think you should have to be married to get these benefits. You run the risk of people marrying for benefits."
- "They shouldn't get any benefits a girlfriend wouldn't get. They're not married."

A large part of the issue for these individuals appeared to be the increased demand on what is perceived as a limited good if gay couples become eligible for benefits:¹²

- “If the DOMA act was repealed or changed then you have more families coming into the system. Then there will be less money to go around. When you are looking at 50,000 people and you want to give them pay raises and now you have to pay for their mental care then there are more people to cover. The family sizes will grow if DOMA is repealed.”
- “Allocation of resources is an issue. It’s a natural progression that benefits will be given to partners. It’s a financial stress on the system.”
- *Participant 1:* “My only issue is there would be an increased waiting period for obtaining housing if a new group of people are eligible for housing. Currently, it may take up to six months to receive housing.”

Participant 2: “Would they up the efforts to build more housing if they allow [gays and lesbians] in housing? It would be a concern of mine if it takes a longer amount of time to get housing.”

Participant 3: “The cost of living is so high that we choose to live in base housing. If the wait is long to get in base housing, then that would be a concern, if they are allowed to live in base housing.”

5.2.4.3 Extension of Benefits – Implementation Suggestions

For most participants, the only way they could envision gay and lesbian couples and their families being afforded spousal benefits would be if the Federal government would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act. Some were incredulous that this was not on the table at the same time as the discussion about a potential repeal of DADT:

- “If you allow homosexuals into the military, why can’t the military support them? You can’t tell me that the military doesn’t have some way to repeal DOMA.”
- “The legal definition needs to be changed federally. My lesbian friends have been together 12 years. ...A marriage is a contract. Once it is in place, it should be honored by the military and the federal government.”

¹² Participants who believed repeal would be positive for the military did not raise the “limited good” argument as a reason to keep DADT in place. Nevertheless, they were quite aware of the high demand on certain family benefits. For example, in one group a participant said she worried that if a parent found out a camp counselor was gay, s/he might be unwilling to let his/her child participate in camp. Another participant, who was strongly in favor of repeal, laughed and said, “This would make more space for other kids to participate,” noting that there are often long waiting lists to register for camp. And while these individuals strongly supported gay families being eligible for base housing, they also noted that the military would need to ensure that the housing supply was able to meet the new, presumably increased, demand.

- “I think DADT should just go away. But I don’t know how you can do it without recognizing same sex marriages. You can be married and we don’t care, but because you are the same sex, you can’t receive benefits.”
- “I think you have to decide on the role of the spouse. There is a very solid baseline of what that dependent will receive as benefits. Whenever you send a family overseas you need to make sure that you define it well—there is no gray area. We need to do that if a soldier goes to Iowa. We need to know what they’re entitled to. [The military leaders] need to prepare for the future and how they will recognize these partners.”

One woman, however, did suggest that the military find a formal way to recognize these relationships—perhaps not calling them “marriages,” but issuing an “affidavit” that would give the couple an official standing. One of the discussion leaders noted in response that certain Federal agencies, such as the CIA and the FBI, do provide affidavits for same sex couples explicitly so that family benefits can be extended. This precedent within the Federal government may provide a viable solution both for those who oppose gay marriage, as well as those who believe gay couples should receive the full array of military benefits that are available.

This “solution” was not supported by everyone, however. Spouses who were worried about the effects of repeal sometimes came to the conclusion that if the military were to allow gays and lesbians to serve, their families perhaps should be recognized by the military and become eligible for benefits. Nevertheless, the consequences for the rest of the country were viewed as quite negative:

- “I can see this leading to legal gay marriage across the board.”
- “Are we going to sanction them [gays and lesbians] to be married? This is ridiculous.”
- “It’s a slippery slope.”

5.2.5 Family Readiness Groups

Seven of the discussions were held with Family Readiness Group leaders or volunteers; in most of the other focus groups and discussions, the moderators asked participants how they believed repeal might affect the Family Readiness components. First, a very small number of participants said they thought repeal would have a negative impact on volunteers. A more common sentiment was that “we can use all the help we can get”:

- “I think the personality to give to the community takes a lot even though you disagree. We each disagree at some level with how each other lives their lives. We have one thing in common and that’s to support our partners.”

- “I would almost guarantee you that if a gay partner walked in and said they wanted to help, they would be allowed to help. I think they are basically Christian-based women and they would allow them to join. They may not introduce them to their kids...[but] the compassion of Christianity kicks in at a certain point.”
- “Family readiness is always looking for volunteers, so we don’t care if they are gay or lesbian.”
- In the civilian world we work next to gays or lesbians every day. A volunteer is a volunteer. What their sexual nature is has nothing to do with the service they can provide. We don’t have a checkmark, ‘Are you gay or lesbian?’”

Secondly, and importantly, among spouses who were concerned about integrating gays and lesbians into the military, very few individuals said they would stop attending the groups. One woman said it “might depend upon the circumstances” (i.e., perhaps the character of the gay person in attendance), while others said that theirs and some other families would no longer attend.

Mostly the conversations concentrated on how to ensure that gay and lesbian partners could be included in Family Readiness events. Many of these individuals saw no reason why the groups should not accept same sex partners since they were all dealing with an identical experience:

- “I believe the community is great and we integrate people into our group. We support each other and we would easily accommodate a partner in our group. I think in regards to the readiness, there are homosexuals already in the service. I think having people who support them, should be there for the spouse. To have your loved one [there to support you] means a lot.”
- “My neighbors, they are openly lesbian. One was deployed for 9 months. I could tell her [non-military spouse] loneliness because we’re a close base, and we share a wall. She was feeling the same things I was feeling when my husband was deployed, too. We still emotionally go through the same things, and that’s what bonds us.”

Despite the recognized importance of this support network, there was significant concern that gay families would not have access to this critical service. If the FRG is viewed as a “benefit,” for example, the non-deployed spouse may always be on the outside looking in:

- “If DOMA is still in place, what can we do for them for family readiness if they are not allowed to access anything?”
- “I was involved in my husband’s previous family readiness group. When someone is crying and they need help, you shouldn’t have to ask if they’re a partner or a [legal] spouse so you can determine if you can help. You should be able to help them deal with what is going on. [If they] aren’t [having to] lead a double life and are being open, you don’t have to worry about it.”

- “Family readiness groups are very important to relationships, couples, and the family unit. You’re also talking about looking at these [gay or lesbian] couples where that is the only relationship they have. When you are talking about deployment and that person is not welcomed, that creates another synergy that is detrimental [to the relationship]. We’re about support, whether to the Service member or the family.”

One woman in Hawaii also noted that FRGs are mostly run by civilians, and worried that a leader’s personal beliefs could have an undue influence on whether the gay partner was welcomed into the group or not:

- “What if you’ve got a gay or lesbian partner and the FRG leader doesn’t like them because of that? There’s nothing that says FRG people need to be fair at all... A hooah FRG leader will look at FRG partner and say, ‘Get out of my face.’”

5.2.5.1 Family Readiness Groups – Implementation Suggestions

To ensure that all family members can access the same set of support services, many participants requested additional training and education, particularly for those individuals who may be leading an FRG. Training would allow them to handle situations with which they were otherwise unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable:

- “I think it is how we support the family, it doesn’t matter how we agree with them. There are conversations that we will have to have now. How do we help [FRG leaders] have [these conversations]? It doesn’t matter what your beliefs are, but what is the support for them on how to have that talk? What does it mean to be homosexual? What about Jenny who asked why XX has two moms?”

One Army spouse offered the following, very concrete suggestion for training:

- “The Army federal training is geared towards loved ones, or anyone who wants to participate. There is a curriculum that goes along with that. Would they change the curriculum to incorporate that somehow in training?”

Another spouse also mentioned this program, saying that it “is there to lessen the cluelessness” among some family members who may be young or lack a breadth of life experience. She suggested that the AFTP could be “revamped” to include education and information about gay and lesbian families.

Finally, several participants suggested that groups not be left to their own devices, but there be some measure of oversight, someone “who could document and make sure everything is being followed

through on.” This would help to ensure that the all Service members and their families were being treated fairly.

5.2.6 Chaplains/Religion

Following the focus group script, moderators asked participants what impact they believed repeal might have on chaplaincy services. In both the discussion groups and the family IEFs, the same issue was often raised by attendees.

5.2.6.1 Perceived Benefits of Repeal

Many participants expressed the opinion that religious issues should be irrelevant to the debate over gays in the military:

- “I’m a Christian and my personal beliefs should not affect policy.”
- “As I say to my husband, ‘we are in the United States of America, not the United States of Christianity.’”
- “I don’t think it is a right of the government to look at you and say that your sexual preference is not acceptable. Maybe in another country that is run by religious people. Not here.”

Several also noted that the freedom of religion issue was not pertinent to the military. Military chaplains, they said—like Service members—are supposed to put their personal beliefs aside: “Many chaplains take a neutral denomination stance and still have to follow Army protocol.” Said one spouse, “Within the military, they are your POC [point of contact] for anything religious.” To that end, the chaplain should serve all people in the unit to which they’re assigned or, at the very least, find someone who can. “If chaplain no longer performs their [military] duties...they should no longer be a chaplain.”

5.2.6.2 Perceived Negative Effects

Other individuals expressed great concern about repeal having a negative effect on the chaplains. Some wondered if chaplains who felt that homosexuality was immoral would be punished for

expressing that opinion or for refusing to provide counseling to a gay or lesbian Service member. They saw repeal as infringing on chaplains' constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech and their freedom of religion:

- “What if you are a Service member who is 18, 19, or 22 and now they are being exposed to that. They are saying, ‘Hey, I do not want to be like this [gay].’ Will the chaplain be able to say, ‘You do not have to live like this. Yes, it is a sin.’? Will the chaplain be able to counsel a gay Service member out of being gay?”
- “I have a concern that the chaplain would not be able to speak openly and freely about their beliefs.”

Ultimately, they said, some denominations might not support a repeal of DADT and would pull their chaplains from the military. While some wondered “if a Protestant minister would be able to teach or minister other religions,” there was concern that repeal might mean Service members and their families would no longer have their religions represented at the base.

5.3 Summary and Suggestions for Implementation

5.3.1 Summary of Findings

Although there was a divergence of opinion about how a potential repeal of DADT would affect military families and community life, the majority of participants expressed the belief that DADT—and DOMA—is creating a disparity because it limits certain family members' access to critically important services. Health insurance, access to counseling services, attendance at Family Readiness Groups, and even access to the commissary were seen as important benefits the military offers to its Service members and their families. If gay families are making the same sacrifices for their country as heterosexual families, said participants, they are deserving of the same benefits that go along with that sacrifice.

5.3.2 Suggestions for Implementation

Several suggestions were offered for ways in which the military might ensure smooth implementation should DADT be repealed:

5.3.2.1 For Children

- Provide educational materials for school teachers and staff so that they can support children of gay parents, and answer questions other children may have;
- Offer informational materials to parents so they can talk to their children about these issues when they—the parents—are ready;
- Provide educational materials for the children themselves;
- Modify the educational curriculum to be inclusive of gay and lesbian families.

5.3.2.2 For the Community

- Include information about repeal of DADT in the Personal Responsibility and Basic Values Training (PreVent) program;
- Disseminate information about repeal through:
 - Support groups
 - Articles in military newspapers
 - Education and training facilities
 - Military TV channel commercials
- Provide support/counseling services for people who are homophobic and are having difficulty coming to terms with the change;
- Look to other institutional settings, experiences for informational resources and implementation ideas:
 - What have they done at universities? (same age cohort, dorms)
 - What are they doing in civilian life?
 - What are they doing in other countries?
- What lessons can be learned from desegregation and letting women into the military?

5.3.2.3 For Family Support

- Make sure all policies are written in inclusive language (e.g., Policy on Violence Against Families needs to go from “spouse” to “intimate partner”);
- Provide training to make FRG welcoming for LGB community and not also lose those who are morally opposed to the lifestyle (Online training would reduce costs);
- Exercise strong leadership that is proactive, communicates well, and enforces the policy—“If it’s a comprehensive program, is anyone watching to see that they are actually going to follow through?”

CHAPTER 6. CONFIDENTIAL DIALOGS

6.1 Overview

The findings presented in this chapter are based on analysis of 160 de-identified transcripts of confidential dialogs carried out with Service members in July, 2010. Eighty (80) of the transcripts are from dialogs with Service members who identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or unsure of their sexual orientation. For readability, these individuals are referred to in the text as “gays and lesbians” or with the acronym GLBU; where the respondent’s gender is known, we say “gay” or “lesbian” as appropriate. Eighty (80) of the transcripts are from Service members self-identifying as heterosexual or refusing to give their sexual orientation; these individuals are called heterosexuals herein. To preserve the tone and feel of the respondents’ statements, we have refrained from all but the most minor editing of quotes. To capture any salient themes, we analyzed equal numbers of transcripts from GLBU and heterosexual respondents. However, because most views expressed by the heterosexual respondents in these dialogs are very similar to those presented in the previous chapters, in this chapter we emphasize the distinctive perspectives of the gay and lesbian Service members, exploring their views on the effects of the current policy as well as the anticipated impact of repeal of DADT.

6.2 Contextual Factors

6.2.1 Politics

Service members, both gay and lesbian and heterosexual, made frequent references to the political context of the repeal decision.

A recurrent observation among some heterosexual Service members was that the decision to repeal DADT was being made by those whose lives would not be directly affected by it. They emphasized that decisions regarding DADT should be informed by, and reflect the interests of the military rather than those of civilians or politicians. One heterosexual Service member described repeal as a “decision that affects the ability for the military to fight battles and win wars... being made by those not actually doing these jobs (somewhat akin to having the people of Canada vote for the President of the United States).” Another saw it as “just another example of our senior leaders being clueless about the ‘real’ world of the challenges that our young leaders have to face.”

Some heterosexual Service members viewed the repeal of DADT as a politically motivated process driven by special interests. One thought the government was answering to the “powerful special interest groups that fund their campaigns” rather than “listening to the American people.” Another heterosexual opined that repeal was being driven by a “handful” of people who want to “push their agenda of trying to change society’s moral standards.” Other heterosexual Service members specifically criticized the President, saying “POTUS is doing it for votes and he doesn’t care about us.” Another worried that repeal would be rushed in an effort to “chop up another victory for the current administration.”

Both heterosexual and gay and lesbian Service members found fault with what they took to be the political motivations behind the review, albeit for different reasons. A heterosexual Service member, regarding repeal as inevitable no matter what the review might find, noted:

- “If I had thought about it more before, I would have seen through how this entire process [the review] is set up towards one end.... You’re only interested in finding ways of making what...is inevitable, more palatable.” (Heterosexual)

By contrast, one gay Service member characterized the dialog and survey as a “PR exercise,” another called it a “homophobic exercise” and objected that no similar polls had been taken prior to making decisions to integrate other groups:

- “We have to poll for the first time in the military on equality and integration (something that was not done with women or racial minorities in the past).” (GLBU)

6.2.2 Timing

Some heterosexual Service members who participated in the dialogs echoed the sentiment expressed in the IEFs, military focus groups, and inbox comments that this is not the right time to repeal DADT.

- “Why is this [repeal] a focus for our government right now, when the numbers in the military are stronger then they have ever been? (Heterosexual)

However, gay and lesbian Service members as well as some heterosexuals expressed the opposite belief that the time is right or repeal is in fact overdue:

- “I personally feel it’s overdue for repeal, and not really an effective policy, nor use of military or governmental resources or time.” (Heterosexual)
- “I think, when initially passed, DADT was an improvement over the status quo; society—and the Armed Services—have moved beyond the policy, and now it has become a hindrance, a distraction, and a political football as opposed to a valid force-shaping tool.” (GLBU)

6.2.3 Legal Issues

Regardless of their sexual orientation, Service members pointed out the need to address legal issues surrounding gay marriage if DADT is repealed.

Some heterosexual Service members described the legal issues as potentially contentious, with one suggesting that the military will “need to figure out what legal status GLBU couples will have to put both spouses and Service members on an equal footing with hetero couples.” According to another heterosexual Service member, the “main hitch” would be:

- ... the “lack of coherent analogue to marriage for same-sex couples on a Federal level,” since “several of the states which...have banned such unions contain major military bases within their boundaries.” (Heterosexual)

Gay and lesbian Service members were also concerned about addressing the legal problems raised by differences in state laws on gay marriage. One gay respondent asked how the military would address the problems of gay or lesbian Service members from states in which same-sex marriages are legal, when they are stationed at an “installation in a state that doesn’t recognize same sex marriage.” Another gay Service member felt the biggest issue “will be states who allow gay marriage and how that will impact the military, TRICARE, etc.”

Gay and lesbian Service members frequently connected the twin issues of gay marriage and spousal benefits, arguing for what they believed to be a fair and equal approach, and in one case, suggesting repeal will “make no difference” unless the law also changes:

- “What happens when the benefits aren’t available because a partner is not considered a spouse? Keep it fair and a “civil union” would be a minimum requirement to qualify as a spouse.” (GLBU)
- “With the military I feel like if they keep the same standard... and only recognize [heterosexual] marriage then there would be no difference.” (GLBU)

- “I mean, they are our spouses and all we want for them is the same security offered to traditional families. IE: daycare for the kids, notification in event of death, things of that nature.”(GLBU)
- “[There should be] equal rights for dependents, for all Service members. It’s one thing to say it’s OK to serve openly, but ...If equal rights is not provided for dependents of all Service members, the strength of the Total Force will still not be as effective as it should be/could be.”(GLBU)

6.2.4 Civil Rights

Service members, both heterosexual and gay and lesbian, often framed the repeal of DADT as a civil rights issue, but with some interesting differences in perspective.

A few heterosexual Service members argued that repeal would violate their own civil rights, freedom of speech, or freedom of religion.

- “Sooner or later, I probably won’t be able to voice my beliefs about homosexuality, without it being labeled ‘Hate Speech,’ despite the fact that I don’t ‘hate’ homosexuals.... Those who believe that the homosexual lifestyle is not an ‘Acceptable Alternative,’ will be demonized, and treated as if they were racists.” (Heterosexual)
- “[Repeal would] be singling out people who have religious convictions, and end up purging them from the military...to appease the conscience of a scant fraction of the Service members who feel compelled to let everyone know that they’re gay.” (Heterosexual)
- “The military has asked us to give up most of our freedom, leave our families behind and sent us to war whether we agree or not and we still do it and if the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell goes away they will be asking me to give up my religion as well.” (Heterosexual)

However, not all heterosexuals took this position. Several heterosexual respondents expressed the view, which was also shared by gay and lesbian Service members, that repeal would mean reclaiming civil rights denied to gays and lesbians under DADT.

- “I am a firm supporter of civil rights and DADT has proven to be a form of discrimination.” (Heterosexual)
- “I love America for its tolerance. I am willing to be a KIA [Killed In Action] because I think America values equality and civil liberties. It would be great if the institution I served in mirrored exactly these ideals.” (Heterosexual)

- “People should be allowed to be themselves and serve. People’s rights are not up to a vote.” (GLBU)
- “It bothers me that I am so closely linked to an organization that is so openly discriminatory. I want to be proud of the Army as an organization.” (GLBU)
- “Homosexuals are discriminated against everyday in the military. We are not allowed to be ourselves. We are forced to hide any relationship we have. It’s unfair treatment.” (GLBU)
- “Our desire to serve our country is what brings us together. We are already of mix of hetero and homosexuals, a mix of races and religions, cultures and backgrounds. We don’t discriminate about anything else at this point, women are even now allowed into submarines in the navy. It’s time we took discrimination out all together.”(GLBU)

6.2.5 Social Experiment

Although this view was more commonly expressed in the focus groups and inbox comments, some Service members in the online dialogs viewed repeal as a kind of social experiment defining the military’s relationship to the wider civilian society. Several gay and lesbian Service members felt that the military should lead the way for the rest of society on this issue:

- “I feel this is too important of an issue to fail. The reputation of the Army as a leading innovator is at stake.” (GLBU)
- “Be the leader in acceptance... Open the doors to all of us.” (GLBU)
- “As a whole we need to continue to be forward thinkers.... Let’s show the world how we are a constantly growing force and we don’t discriminate against anyone.” (GLBU)

One heterosexual Service member even predicted that repeal of DADT would “pave the way for women in Combat Arms... since it’ll show that Combat Arms units can survive and work coherently even when there’s possible sexual connections or tensions in a unit.”

6.2.6 Comparisons with Earlier Integrations

As discussed in earlier chapters, some heterosexual Service members rejected the validity of any comparison between repeal of DADT and past integration efforts. However, gays and lesbians as well as some heterosexual Service members drew parallels between repeal and earlier efforts to

integrate African Americans and women in the military, and suggested looking to those earlier integrations as historical examples that can provide lessons on how to repeal DADT.

- “The Military tackled and continues to work on EO (Equal Opportunity) when it comes to color, religion, ethnicity and gender. Sexual orientation is our last front. We can do this and we can do it well!” (Heterosexual)
- “Effective repeal of DADT should follow similar repeals of discriminatory practice that has occurred in the past.” (Heterosexual)
- “I think we should look at desegregation and gender equality issues. The majority of Service members objected, yet our military is the strongest in the world because our leaders made it happen.”(Gay Service member)
- “When the military was desegregated back in the days of WWII, it was feared that the nation would descend into civil war once again. No white man would EVER take orders from an African American. But the armed forces were desegregated and civil war never came. This great nation proved itself better than those fears. Next came women in the military. No woman could POSSIBLY do the same job as a man. And what self-respecting man would take orders from a woman? And surely there would be sexual promiscuity. Pure chaos and possibly civil war would ensue. But...again this great nation survived. In fact, this nation has benefited from the military’s desegregation and inclusion of women. And now the next big issue seems to be allowing gays to openly serve in the military.....Let me guess. We’re going to fall into civil war and run around in rainbow flags, right? Historically speaking, I’m going to guess that the nation will move forward as it always has. Probably even better...” (GLBU)

Some gay and lesbian Service members further argued that, like earlier integrations, successful repeal would take time, but in the end the military will be far stronger because of it.

- “The military would eventually adjust to this issue, just as it has ...to allowing black people and women to serve.” (GLBU)
- “There may be an initial negative impact. However, after a potential initial surge of craziness, everything will calm down... We can educate most and hope for the best as we do with all other ‘social categories.’ ” (GLBU)
- “When the military had a segregation policy, it was said that integrating the races would destroy morale and disrupt unit cohesion and the mission. Yes, it took some getting used to, but people dealt with the racism and began seeing black people as equals... eventually...Overall I think the change will be great for the military, and for the country.”(GLBU)

6.2.7 Foreign Militaries

Gay and lesbian Service members pointed to the successful inclusion of gays and lesbians in other militaries that ...”are still the same military they were before.”

- “The British, Canadians, Australians, and the Israelis have all repealed their anti-gay requirements in the past 2 decades, and they didn’t fall apart; why should we?” (GLBU)
- “We are the last major Western nation that has this ban. Let’s look to the rest of the western world as a model for this. There, armies have both coped and succeeded with this.” (GLBU)

6.3 Individual Influences and Experiences

6.3.1 Religion, Morality, and Upbringing

The script used with self-identified heterosexual Service members specifically asked respondents if their religious values contributed to their attitudes toward repeal of DADT, and many agreed that was the case. Gay and lesbian Service members, while not asked this same question, often noted how values might affect other Service members’ negative attitudes toward repeal.

As in the focus groups and inbox comments, some heterosexual Service members indicated they are Christian and religiously opposed to homosexuality. One respondent linked repeal with a series of perceived negative consequences of detaching religion from the public sphere:

- “All of this is just part of the problem... we are headed in the wrong direction on so many fronts: Removing the 10 Commandments, the church/state issues, and the family values/morals... all being torn apart. All the things this nation was formed to preserve and stand for is being ripped away... and it continues with the ‘right to be gay... and in the military’.” (Heterosexual)

Another heterosexual Service member analogized repeal to spiritual murder and pointed out that he was not asked to work with murderers. He continued:

- “What would they [the DOD] do? Come out with a memo saying that the Bible, Koran, etc. are wrong and that it is ok to be gay?” (Heterosexual)

Other heterosexual Service members, however, indicated that their religious beliefs led them to support repeal. One wrote, “I am Christian, therefore I believe in compassion and treating people

equally.” Another heterosexual Service member identified himself as a “Reverend for a Christian Church” and felt that repeal was the right thing to do because “I believe God created all equal every man, woman and child.” He concluded, “As long as you do right, there can be no wrong!”

Most heterosexual Service members, however, indicated that their religious and moral beliefs had no impact on their views of gays and lesbians or DADT and its potential repeal. Many replied in the negative; “Heck no. I say let them come out and serve right along with us.” Some heterosexual Service members who described homosexuality as a “sin” did not necessarily oppose repeal.

- “I am a Christian and do believe that homosexuality is sinful BUT NO WORSE than the sins all of us have. I also know that God has not given me or any other human the moral clarity to know with certitude what the right answer is, so leaving room to be wrong in my beliefs is important to me. I do think I could work with Gay personnel fairly as friends, peers, superiors and subordinates.” (Heterosexual)
- “I work with a lot of sinners and I am one too so I do not think it will affect my ability to work with or lead people who are gay.” (Heterosexual)

Several heterosexual Service members expressed their belief that military service requires individuals to set aside their personal religious views. Some referred to DOD’s nondiscrimination policy in a religious context, claiming that “soldiers are not supposed to impose their religious beliefs on others.”

- “My personal beliefs do not extend to others and should not impede their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” (Heterosexual)
- “My religious and moral beliefs are checked when I put on my uniform- my political, religious and moral beliefs do not affect my opinions as a member of the United States military. All of my Marines, regardless of sexuality, religion, race, creed, etc. are treated equally with care and concern.” (Heterosexual)
- “Religion cannot be brought into this, because I serve the country. I must put aside my religious beliefs a lot of the time to complete what is asked of me.” (Heterosexual)

Some gays and lesbians mentioned that they were religious; however, they said they do not share the same conservative religious values as many others in the military. They described their own personal religious and moral beliefs as follows:

- “I do go to Church and I do believe in God. I just do not share the same conservative views.” (GLBU)
- “My religious views are (that) my creator made me in his likeness.” (GLBU)

- “I wasn’t raised to hate.” (GLBU)

The majority of gay and lesbian Service members, however, focused on the religious and moral beliefs of others. One Service member insisted that repeal was not a religious issue:

- “Many people say that it is against their Christian beliefs. Well it may be. In the Army we are not allowed to hinder anyone from practicing their religious belief.... This has nothing to do with hindering anyone’s religious beliefs.” (GLBU)

Most gay and lesbian Service members, however, felt that other Service members’ religious and moral beliefs, as well as their upbringing, played an important role in shaping individual opinions on repeal. One lesbian Service member traced homophobia to “soldiers who were brought up in real religious families or not very open minded homes.” Another lesbian asserted that “there are those whose religious beliefs will make it a challenge for them to accept this repeal and be ok with it.” One gay Service member wrote that he lives with a “constant fear” that “someone with a religious belief that does not agree with my lifestyle may push the issue to have me discharged from the military not for performance but because of who I chose to love.” Another said he would be “overjoyed” at repeal because he “wouldn’t have to spend so much time ‘hiding’ everything because someone’s religious views prevent me from talking about it.”

A few gay Service members warned that it was not possible to “unteach” someone’s “religious beliefs or upbringing,” and that the “Bible, Torah & Koran all teach hate towards the homosexuals.” While it might be difficult to have others “rethink or re-engineer their morals,” these respondents insisted that it would be absolutely necessary that other Service members “tolerate” gays and lesbians under repeal.

6.3.2 Homophobia and Homosexual Stereotypes

Heterosexual Service members sometimes cited information about gays and lesbians to support their opposition to repeal. For example, a few voiced concerns about the homosexual lifestyle, particularly in health-related areas:

- “Do your research—check out how long the average homosexual life span is, and compare the health of the average homosexual with those who are not. The homosexual community is rife with disease and sickness—all of which are a massive liability.” (Heterosexual)

- “Combat injuries will be treated differently due to concerns of safe blood or getting HIV from an injured bleeding shipmate.” (Heterosexual)

For their part, gay and lesbian Service members saw such views as indicative of “homophobia” in the military, grounded in misconceptions and inaccurate stereotypes about homosexuality.

- “There is a lot of homophobia, most of it based on a lot of fairy tales, we do not recruit, I really do not care to look at most of you in the shower, I don’t want to have sex with you in the foxhole (that was one they said about women), blah, blah, blah.” (GLBU)
- “The fear I hear comes mainly from male soldiers who somehow think every gay man in the army is going to attack them in the shower. That’s not going to happen, but that’s the talk I hear.” (GLBU)
- “[homosexuality] is not a contagious disease and just because the DADT is repealed doesn’t mean everyone is going to come out of the closet and turn the military into a gay night club.” (GLBU)

6.4 Impact of the Current Policy on Gay and Lesbian Service Members

The following section, unique to this chapter, explores gay and lesbian Service members’ perspectives on the effects and costs of maintaining the current DADT policy. It provides an important backdrop to understanding their views of the likely impact of repeal.

6.4.1 Whether and With Whom to “Come Out”

Gay and lesbian respondents were asked if they had “come out” to others, including family members, friends, and other Service members. Although a few said they had not disclosed their sexual orientation even to family, most indicated family members and friends outside the military knew of their orientation. The decision of whether to tell other Service members—described by one gay respondent as “an extreme and excruciating act of trust”—was tricky. Some had opted to adhere to the DADT policy and say nothing, while acknowledging that at least some others knew about their sexual orientation anyway.

- “Some others in the unit know but I haven’t physically told anyone. Half of them are in the same boat and the other half don’t really care. I guess they know because of how I carry myself in my normal life outside of uniform but in uniform it is professional.” (GLBU)

For those who did disclose their sexual orientation to other Service members, the decision to go ahead involved weighing a complex set of considerations. One GLBU Service member commented on the potential risks even of telling friends who had retired from the military, but might still be called back to active duty:

- “I have to say that there is a lot of energy and thought that goes into determining who to tell. I have friends who are retired but may be called back to active duty that I would love to share the family or non-professional part of my life but cannot since they could potentially be subject to UCMJ again.” (GLBU)

GLBU respondents who had “come out” to other Service members said they had been very selective about who they told, usually disclosing their sexual orientation only to a very few trusted people. These individuals were described as: “only my closest of military friends; usually people who are gay as well;” “those that are trustworthy and need to know;” and, “only those I feel comfortable telling.” One Service member noted that after awhile, “You get used to feeling out whether or not people are trustworthy.” Several GLBU Service members emphasized that, for obvious reasons, they had not disclosed their sexual orientation to anyone in their chain of command: one GLBU respondent reported having told “nobody in my chain of command, or I will lose my commission,” while another said “several other service members know; however, my commander has not been told.” In one case, the respondent indicated that even though, “I never said the words to my commanding officer ...he was on my FB and I’m sure he knew. He would ask about ‘my friend,’ etc.” This observation and others like it point to the existence of “tacit knowledge” of gay and lesbian Service members’ sexual orientation even in the absence of an explicit statement to that effect.

6.4.2 DADT Negatively Impacts GLBU Service Members and Military Life

Although committed to the mission of military service, gay and lesbian Service members indicated that DADT places a heavy burden on their shoulders. They reported that the need to keep silent about their sexual orientation limited or limits their effectiveness in a variety of ways. For instance, inability to communicate openly with other Service members or their commanders may inadvertently hamper unit cohesion and mission readiness.

- “I got out of active duty partially due to the impact DADT was having on me. I found it increasingly more frustrating to have to hide who I was which was making me increasingly more irritable which was impacting my work.” (GLBU)

- “It [DADT] forces good people who chose to join the military to keep a very important part of who they are secret. It may not seem like a big deal to a straight person, but not being able to share with your friends and fellow soldiers your relationship status is a major stressor. It’s probably the number one topic of conversation during free time. Keeping it secret or even worse, lying about it for fear of being discharged causes undue stress and distracts from mission readiness.” (GLBU)

Gay and lesbian leaders also noted that DADT restricts their ability to lead effectively:

- “In my unit we teach intrusive leadership, to be proactive in Marines lives from drinking, being socially responsible, etc... but with issues such as couples relationship, domestic violence, parenting etc... I have a hard time counseling Marines because I know it’s wrong but I haven’t been in that situation to relate. By being gay I can say they can understand where I come from. I can relate to the Marines from my experiences and experiences of others.” (GLBU)

Some gay and lesbian Service members, especially gay Marines, reported going to extreme lengths to “fit in,” fearing for their physical safety if others were to find out they were gay. To be accepted in their units, a few gay and lesbian Service members reported having sex with or marrying members of the opposite sex. One participant claimed the burden of silence under DADT has contributed to alcoholism, depression, or suicidal tendencies in gay/lesbian Service members.

- “I’ve been to war and back. I am no different than those that stand next to me other than I have sex with both men and women. Guys in my unit treat gays like shit. I have slept with girls and for that I am well accepted. Yet, if I told them I had a man for a partner—I fear for my safety.” (GLBU)
- “When threatened with people gunning for my job, I turned to the only friend I had for a scapegoat. I got married to a male friend to get them off my back. I’m very ashamed of what I did and it turned out to be more of a burden than a blessing.” (GLBU)
- “I have also seen the negative effects of DADT on other gay Service members. Especially our younger sailors. They have no one to talk to and become depressed, suicidal, alcoholic...” (GLBU)

A few gay and lesbian Service members claimed to have been discriminated against in their work by senior officers who suspected they were gay, or else anticipated that future promotions might not be forthcoming unless DADT is repealed. With DADT in place, they have no recourse for complaint and no way to discuss the incident with others.

- “It just sucks that when you are doing your job and you get a supervisor that hears about me being a lesbian and they try to ruin your military career and make you look like you’re incompetent.” (Lesbian Service member)

- “I joined with the intent of making this my career. But as my years tack on and I advance, more people are noticing no ring on my finger. I fear that if it is not repealed, I will start being passed over by less qualified guys, for ‘various reasons’.” (GLBU)

Gay and lesbian Service members also talked about what they viewed as the inequities of their current situations with respect to benefits compared with those of married heterosexual Service members whose spouses receive partner relocation benefits, life insurance, marriage counseling, family support services, and most importantly, health insurance.

- “Currently, only recognized (straight) dependents may be benefactors of our Service member life insurance (SGLI) so I have to put down my parents or siblings as benefactors instead. My partner of [years] is not eligible for health or dental insurance which has prevented us from pursuing rewarding active duty assignments since she would not have those benefits in transition while looking for employment in a new location.” (GLBU)
- “My partner does not get health benefits, she cannot get in state tuition when we move frequently, we cannot have on post housing because she is not eligible for a military dependent ID card, she cannot shop in the commissary or PX, we cannot go to military social functions together.” (GLBU)
- “It would be wonderful to know that my family would be taken care of while I am deployed... I worry sometimes that I may lose my family and not be provided the same marriage counseling as others are given.” (GLBU)

6.4.3 DADT Negatively Affects Personal Relationships

Some gay and lesbian Service members said that under DADT, the constant vigilance to monitor their actions in public puts a major strain on their personal relationships. Beyond public displays of affection, these gay and lesbian Service members worry that subtle relationship cues, such as “holding hands,” “sitting too close,” or “attending unit functions together” will reveal their sexual orientation.

- “It [not being able to reveal one’s sexual orientation] makes life very difficult. It is hard to explain to a child why their parents can’t hold hands or attend school or unit functions together the way other families do. It also places a strain on my relationship when I am deployed since I am afraid that someone will find the picture I carry in my shirt pocket or find a letter from my family. It also makes it very difficult and uncomfortable to explain to someone why I wear a wedding ring since I am not married.” (GLBU)

- “She [the respondent’s partner] feels that we cannot be open about our relationship in public on the off chance that a fellow Service member may see us together. This feeling of having to keep hidden or secret makes it seem as though there is something “wrong” about our relationship.” (GLBU)
- “Well, it’s harder to be together. Constant fear to be seen out in public, the unfairness that I can’t hold her hand in public, or being afraid to look at her too long in public. On deployments we have to make sure not to use full names on cards, packages, etc. Change our pronouns...being in the military and a relationship is hard enough, add the fact you have to hide it, it makes it extremely lonely.” (GLBU)
- “DADT prohibits anything but a very discrete relationship, which is not always healthy...it prohibits being open with other friends, etc.” (GLBU)

One GLBU Service member summed up the overall impact of DADT as follows: “This lack of inclusion...impacts personal and professional relationships. Not an effective way to create a brotherhood and sisterhood of arms.”

6.5 General Impact of Repeal

6.5.1 Impact Will Vary Over Time

Most Service members, regardless of sexual orientation or their views on repeal, largely agreed that over time, it would be accepted.

- “As time goes on, the repeal will be more and more accepted, as most changes are.” (Heterosexual)

Many gay and lesbian Service members agreed that it will take time for the DADT repeal to be accepted, but some argued that the transition will happen more quickly than many are expecting:

- “People will be a little weird about it at first, but the Army has a history of adapting and overcoming.” (GLBU)
- “I don’t think it’s going to be such a big, huge, horrible thing that DoD is telling everyone it’s going to be. If it is repealed, everyone will look around their spaces to see if anyone speaks up. They’ll hear crickets for a while. A few flamboyant guys and tough girls will join to rock the boat and make a scene. They’re actions and bad choices will probably get them kicked out. After a little time has gone by, then a few of us will speak up. And instead of a deluge of panic and violence...there’ll be ripple on the water’s surface that dissipates quicker than you can watch.” (GLBU)

In the short term, gay and lesbian Service members expected an increase in anti-gay expression, both anti-gay jokes and more serious activity, including harassment and hate crimes against Service members who come out or are suspected to be gay or lesbian.

- “I feel like there’ll be lots of jokes at first. There already are with the subject being topical, but I think it’ll get better with time.” (GLBU)
- “Harassment will very possibly increase for a period of time when more people are open. And may also be inflicted on non-gay personnel if they are assumed to be gay or have gay friends.” (GLBU)
- “I know my family is worried about potential recrimination against me should I come out, assuming DADT is repealed. And there have already been several situations in the military involving hurting Service members who are gay or perceived to be gay.” (GLBU)

6.5.2 Overtness/Flamboyance

As seen in previous chapters, some heterosexuals feared that repeal of DADT would result in more “flamboyant” behavior from gay and lesbian Service members. The latter largely rejected this notion, arguing they are professionals who will adhere to the rules and do not intend to behave in a manner that would make other Service members feel uncomfortable.

- “I think a lot of people think there is going to be this big “outing” [sic] and people flaunting their gayness, but they forget that we’re in the military. That stuff isn’t supposed to be done during duty hours regardless if you’re gay/straight.” (GLBU)
- “If repealed, I would not act any differently than I do now because my sexuality is a private matter where I do not owe an explanation.” (GLBU)
- “I won’t go around the office waving a rainbow flag LOL.” (GLBU)
- “If I am asked the question, then I will answer honestly, but I will not just go to work the next day after DADT is repealed and just announce to everyone that I am Gay. I try my best not to make the people around me uncomfortable; I already know how that feeling can be.” (GLBU)

Many gay and lesbian, as well as some heterosexual Service members, believed that little will change in day-to-day military life in their units if DADT is repealed.

- “There are already gay men and women serving with me...and it does not have an impact on how I do my job.” (GLBU)

- “They [the military] have to be able to acknowledge that: 1. gay people are already here, serving proudly; and 2. Other than us being able to admit our orientation without fear of reprimand, nothing else is going to change.” (GLBU)
- “In my unit that I am in now there are individuals that are homosexual. Of course they aren’t able to come out and say it but we know. I really don’t see an impact in my unit. We haven’t had any issues thus far and these soldiers have been deployed numerous times with the same people.” (Heterosexual)

6.5.3 Lifting the Weight of Serving in Silence

As seen, the threat of being “found out” loomed large in the day-to-day lives of these gays and lesbians. Many said they felt as though they live in daily fear of having “who they are” discovered, which could result in losing their job, benefits, and career. Repeal of DADT presents the opportunity to lift the weight of secrecy.

- “I doubt I would run down the street yelling “I’m out”; but it would take a knife out of my back I have had for a long time. You have no idea what it is like to have to serve in silence...” (GLBU)
- “I’m a soldier. I’m a soldier that’s good at my job, who has deployed, and who has served very honorably. I come from a military family and to stand here and do what I do is something I’m proud of. I’m tired of people thinking that gay Service members are a disgrace to our military and I want to finally be able to tell the truth about who I am, without losing my job or benefits.” (GLBU)

In daily life, these gays and lesbians simply wished to be able to be as honest about their lives as heterosexual Service members. They expressed the desire to be able to do simple, everyday things like have a picture of their partner nearby or be able to talk about what they did over the weekend.

- “Personally, I don’t feel that this is something I should have to ‘disclose’. Straight people don’t have to disclose their orientation. I will just be me. I will bring my family to family events. I will put family pictures on my desk. I am not going to go up to people and say, hi there—I’m gay.” (GLBU)
- “How do straight people disclose theirs? They just talk about the day they spent together at the park or restaurant or with their kids. It is not explicitly said but rather it is discovered through conversation.” (GLBU)

6.5.4 Military Values

Heterosexual Service members held differing opinions as to how repeal of DADT would reflect core military values. As was true in the focus groups and inbox comments, some voiced concern that repeal is tantamount to “corrupting the integrity of what keeps us free,” and rejected the notion that American values support the “homosexual agenda.” Others said they believe America values “equality and civil liberties” and consider DADT “one of the last legalized negative discriminatory acts perpetuated by the military.”

Gay and lesbian Service members expressed the view that the military should reflect American values of equality, diversity, liberty, and tolerance both at home and abroad. They said they would have more pride in the military and the country if DADT were repealed.

- “As the military becomes a more diverse environment it becomes something I hold even more pride in being a part of. At the heart of it I am an American, I believe in equality. Our country was built on diversity, our service-members should reflect that diversity.” (GLBU)
- “I’d be much more comfortable working in an open, tolerant organization. My close friends that are gay and in the navy, I don’t see coming out right away, but I see them having more pride in the organization and feeling better about themselves.” (GLBU)
- “Overall the military would reap a huge benefit in terms of prestige, honest service and integrity.” (GLBU)
- “I’d have more pride in the organization if it didn’t support DADT and more pride in my country. I feel like we’re a bit behind the curve.” (GLBU)
- “I think people, many people would have more respect for the military in that I often hear the comment that our military should be more fair and equal and that the army in many other countries accept this easily and have done fine with it.”(GLBU)

6.6 Impact of Repeal on Military Life

6.6.1 Impact on Unit Cohesion

As was true in the focus groups and inbox comments, some heterosexual Service members who participated in these dialogs voiced concern about the impact of repeal on unit cohesion and morale, particularly in deployment and combat situations.

- “It destroys the morale of a unit to have a homosexual in it. I place men in danger daily. They must remain in vehicles for periods of time upwards of 18 hours without getting out. This requires certain bodily functions to be taken care of in a manner that requires exposure to the other men in the vehicle. If a homosexual is in the vehicle these functions could not be taken care of safely and properly without harassment.” (Heterosexual)
- “My unit would not handle this situation well because of the attitudes of its personnel. It would cause a decent amount of discord, and probably quite a few problems for the gay Service member.” (Heterosexual)

For their part, drawing on lessons from past experiences, gay and lesbian Service members predicted repeal would have only minimal impact on unit cohesion or military effectiveness.

- “When it comes to having your wing man right next to you if you have to deal with the enemy, it’s not going to matter if they are gay or straight.” (GLBU)
- “I really don’t think there would be much of an impact. There are a few members of my unit who are openly gay and if anything it seems to make the unit feel comfortable. I know at least they’re being honest. It doesn’t seem to affect their work performance, and unit work performance didn’t change after they expressed their preference.” (GLBU)
- If I was in a foxhole facing the enemy, all I really would care about is if the person next to me can help me defeat the enemy. Onboard ship I cared about the same thing.” (GLBU)

6.6.2 Staffing

Based on their perceptions of the current effects of DADT, a few gay and lesbian Service members anticipated that repeal will likely go more smoothly in some Services and jobs than in others:

- “I bet it’s okay in the Air Force and Navy. The [Marine] Corps is different. Might not go over very well. Maybe if it is allowed I will re-up with the AF or Army.” (GLBU Marine)
- “I’ll be working with a lot of Army guys [on assignment] and understand that they have a completely different culture. Navy personnel are really good about being given a set of boundaries (you can do this and this, you can’t do that) and figuring out a solution to the problem. I think the Navy and Air Force would have the least problems accepting it. The marines might have one or two disgruntled leatherneck but if you emphasize service with honor and integrity, they’re really motivated by that kind of dialogue. As for the Army, well, I don’t really know what their culture is like.” (GLBU)

- “My MOS is very advanced, requiring a high degree of intelligence and a great deal of creativity, so I think the environment is very friendly. I know some of the front line units can be a little more intimidating.”(GLBU)

6.6.3 Risk of Harassment

Gay and lesbian Service members were concerned about the “harassment” and “hate crimes” that might await them if they were to openly acknowledge their sexual orientation and noted that it will be the leaders’ job to make it crystal clear that harassment will not be tolerated.

- “I believe that openly gay individuals will be harassed initially, and heterosexuals who are assumed to be gay will be harassed- human nature. (GLBU)
- “If someone’s a bit different from other guys, they get ribbed a bit [...] I let roll off my back pretty well, probably because I’m a bit older and my skin’s a little thicker. But I’ve seen younger guys, both straight and gay, get berated and humiliated for being different.” (GLBU)
- “If soldiers are allowed to feel this out for themselves, there is a good chance of more harassment in some units. If the command states that it absolutely will not tolerate any harassment of other soldiers, including for sexual orientation, then it will definitely decrease.”(GLBU)

6.6.4 Privacy Concerns

As discussed in previous chapters, heterosexual Service members frequently brought up concerns about privacy in housing and showering when considering the effects of repeal. Some gay and lesbian Service members acknowledged that heterosexuals might find showers in the field uncomfortable, while a few judged privacy issues as exaggerated.

- “I think that it’s gonna be a big issue most people aren’t going to be comfortable taking showers and sleeping in the same berthing as open gays.” (GLBU)
- “Being lesbian onboard ships in a predominantly male profession I can honestly say that what matters to sailors are respect, pay, and marginally decent food.... Life onboard is all about the mission and trusting the sailors next to you. Questions/fears about small living/work spaces and showers are overhyped.” (Lesbian Service member)

6.6.5 Retention

As noted in previous chapters, some heterosexuals indicated they would be less likely to consider staying in the military were DADT to be repealed, but others said, “I am a soldier first,” and the policy would not change their desire to remain in the military and serve their country.

Most gay and lesbian Service members said repeal would strongly increase their likelihood of staying in the military. Several said they “love the military,” but serving under DADT takes an emotional toll, forcing them to “lie,” “hide” who they are, and live under constant fear of losing their job and career. Repeal of DADT would enable these Service members to continue their military careers with increased comfort and confidence.

- “Everyone wants security. If I feel like I could lose my career at any moment, it does not make me feel secure in my profession, and I will need to look elsewhere for that security. If I do not have to worry about that, I love being in the military, and will finish my career in it.” (GLBU)
- [If repeal were to occur] “I would be willing to stay in the military for a longer period of time. As it stands right now, I want to do the least amount of time as possible to get my retirement and get out so that I don’t have to feel like I’m always hiding something.” (GLBU)
- “I will likely stay in until I retire. I love what I do. I only want to leave because I am tired of worrying that I will be kicked out because of who I choose to love and I am tired of hiding who I am.” (GLBU)

6.6.6 Access to Services

Some gay and lesbian Service members noted that repeal would benefit them by allowing them to access existing military support services. For example, one gay Service member reported that under DADT he cannot access needed mental health treatment because his condition is directly tied to the stress of having to hide his sexual orientation. Others pointed to value of repeal in making services more responsive to everyone’s needs:

- “I think it would strengthen my unit and the navy. I’ve watched the leadership—including the CO [commanding officer] and chaplain—step around these issues as they attempt to work with sailors, meet their needs and support them and help them grow and develop.” (GLBU)

- “For some of my sailors (I directly supervise a division of 25) it would mean that their family issues are taken as seriously as those who have a more traditional family structure (hopefully).” (GLBU)

6.7 Impact on Family and Community

6.7.1 Overall Impact

All Service members who participated in the confidential dialogs were asked about the potential impact of repeal on themselves and their families.

Negative comments about the anticipated impact of repeal of DADT in these areas were expressed exclusively by heterosexual Service members, and ranged from the general to the prediction of a series of dire consequences that might ensue.

- “If the case is open service for homosexuals the ultimate impact will be negative for me, my family, my unit and the military.” (Heterosexual)
- “I believe that the impact would be devastating to me, my family, my unit, the military, our country and the world!” (Heterosexual)
- “I would not have a job. The jobless rate for veterans would sky rocket, because there are many who would remove themselves from the military.” (Heterosexual)
- “If I quit my job because of the degree of drama I have to deal with at work because of this asinine policy, then my family would suffer for it. I would definitely take a momentous pay cut for it, because jobs in [place] are severely lacking. I would most likely lose my house—possibly even go bankrupt depending on how long I end up out of work.” (Heterosexual)

By contrast, many Gay and lesbian Service members as well as some of their heterosexual counterparts looked favorably upon the prospect of repeal. One GLBU Service member indicated the repeal would be, “Positive for myself, my family, and my unit.” A heterosexual Service member stated,

- “Both my husband and I would be happier about serving in a military that doesn’t discriminate. And maybe we would get to meet some great people who couldn’t serve with DADT as policy. So indirectly, it would be a pro.” (Heterosexual)

GLBU Service members reported that a repeal of DADT would be a relief for their families by eliminating the need to be guarded and the constant fear of involuntary separation as well as permitting better integration of the various parts of their lives:

- “. . . I won’t have to worry about losing my job, my family, they won’t have to worry about me losing my job, and the military, they will not lose the thousands of dollars of training and skills they have given me to complete our mission.” (GLBU)
- “It would make my family more free to discuss both my military service and my relationships with members of both communities. Not having to watch what to say to whom.” (GLBU)
- “My family will be thrilled because they will be able to be actively involved in my career, which of course will make me happier as well.” (GLBU)

6.7.2 Impact on Socialization and Attendance at Social Events

GLBU as well as heterosexual Service members mentioned the anticipated impact of repeal of DADT on socialization, including barriers and facilitators to participation in social events. However, perspectives varied by sexual orientation. Some heterosexual Service members claimed that repeal of DADT would sharply reduce or limit their social interactions and attendance at military-sponsored social events.

- “If repealed I would have to deal with it and so would my family but I would not attend (unless ordered to) any function where that particular lifestyle would be exhibited.” (Heterosexual)
- “They [respondent’s family] would not want to attend social functions or feel comfortable dealing with a ‘partner’ while I am on deployment...They have the same views that I do. They would not want to be around it. They would not want to attend functions like family days or the Marine Corps Ball.” (Heterosexual)

In contrast, many GLBU Service members viewed repeal as a potentially liberating experience in providing increased opportunities for social interaction and participation in these social events for themselves and their families.

- “I will like being able to bring her to military social events where spouses/dates are invited and not feeling the need to explain that I am not single. It’s nobody’s business, but not hiding the fact that I’m in a relationship will be nice.” (GLBU)
- “My partner would be able to meet my unit members and their family as well as my unit would be able to see the more human/non-military side of my life, which adds to unit

cohesion. Currently, we have been forced to avoid topics such as family, children, vacations, etc... since it would be dicey area which could potentially place either myself or my fellow sailors in a difficult situation with the law.” (GLBU)

6.7.3 Impact on Personal Relationships

Many gay and lesbian Service members discussed the anticipated impact of the repeal of DADT on their personal relationships, as did a small number of heterosexuals. The two groups varied considerably in the expected nature of the impact they foresaw.

Of the few heterosexual Service members who mentioned repeal in the context of their own personal relationships, one concluded that repeal might ultimately lead to divorce and another expressed strong reservations about the prospect of cohabitating with a gay Service member:

- “I don’t like people trying to force their beliefs down my throat, and that’s what this is. I will probably have to get out and look for another job...Financial struggles are near the top of the list of environmental factors contributing to divorce.” (Heterosexual)
- “The only effect it could have on me is if I was forced to cohabitate with someone gay who does not respect my own orientation. As for my family, my spouse is also a Soldier and feels the same way about cohabitation.” (Heterosexual)

GLBU Service members talked about the positive effects they thought repeal would have in not forcing them to make a choice between a relationship and a career.

- “I will still be me, there will still be gays in the military and everyone will still do the job they took the oath to do. The difference is that I will be able to have relationships outside of work with whoever I want without the chance of losing my career.” (GLBU)
- “I would probably reconsider staying in and doing 20 years, but right now with DADT enforced it’s hard on my relationship and I’m going to choose my relationship over the service right now until I do see a change.” (GLBU)

6.8 Implementation of Repeal

Service members, regardless of their sexual orientation, agreed that how repeal is implemented will be very important to its success. This view was aptly summarized by one heterosexual Service member as follows:

- “It’s all in execution of the policy...lots of prep work on policy, lots of training and leadership involvement at all levels...and then appropriate follow-up to ensure we get the outcome we intended.” (Heterosexual)

6.8.1 Strong Leadership

As seen in the focus groups and inbox comments, regardless of their sexual orientation, Service members uniformly stressed the need for good leadership if repeal of DADT is to be successful, particularly in light of the likely opposition it will face from some military members. Gay and lesbian Service members advised that the best way to accomplish this goal is to approach the policy change as an “order” from the “highest levels of command.”

- [What will be needed is] “A statement from the highest authority saying that discrimination of any sort will not be tolerated and will be dealt with, quickly and seriously.” (GLBU)
- “In the military, you are given orders and you drive on. This policy needs to come from the top, with specific guidelines. Soldiers will then adapt, as they always do.” (GLBU)
- “Subordinates emulate superiors, get the leadership on board and the troops will follow suit.” (GLBU)
- “If the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer are onboard the rest of the command will follow.” (GLBU)

While acknowledging the role of strong leadership in setting a good example, some gay and lesbian Service members were nevertheless skeptical that all leaders will back implementation efforts if repeal does occur. They anticipated they might have to suffer the consequences if need be.

- “There are many commanders at all levels that have made their opposition known somewhat publicly. When that happens, the soldiers are given the unofficial message that homophobia is acceptable. Within those commands, yes, I do have fear that there will be repercussions for ‘coming out.’” (GLBU)
- “Frankly, I anticipate that there’s going to be some minimal percentage of mid-grade officers who are going to resent the change and refuse to acknowledge members who serve openly. I’m talking about the guys who’ve been in for 15 years or so. They’ve been in long enough to remember the good ol’ (homophobic) days. I expect there’s going to be lots of griping, cursing under their breath, down-grading on evals, FITREPS for gay personnel, etc. They’ll be in long enough to have real pull so they’ll make some poor sailors life miserable for awhile and then they’ll retire. I don’t see how there’s any way around it, though. We’ll just have to weather it I guess.” (GLBU)

6.8.2 Clear, Unequivocal Guidance

Gay, lesbian, and heterosexual Service members generally agreed that repeal should be carried out with consistently applied clear standards. Some gay and lesbian Service members made a special point of noting that clear guidance should extend to the rights of heterosexuals as well as those of gays and lesbians. When considering harassment policy, for example, these respondents argued that heterosexual Service members should be assured that no sexual harassment of any kind will be tolerated, and that gay and lesbian Service members will receive no special treatment. They noted that the best way to provide such assurance is to clearly communicate the message that the same protections will be afforded to everyone, regardless of sexual orientation.

- “Just make sure they [the leadership] explain, that although it’s repealed, it won’t mean that anybody’s work ethic will be different, the same is expected out of everyone & the same rules apply. I think a lot of people think that if it gets repealed “gays” will get special treatment, or they feel threatened that they will be “harassed” when in reality, it will work as it does outside the military...all unwanted sexual advances or inappropriate behavior should have repercussions.” (GLBU)
- “[There will not be problems]”...if the policy is implemented vertically, with a zero tolerance policy, and the same protections allotted to straight Service members. I think it would be a non-issue.” (GLBU)
- “Policy must give commanders broad latitude to maintain good order and discipline, both to protect sexual and gender minorities, but also protect the privacy of the majority... Soldiers must have a right to speak their minds and express disapproval of others’ lifestyles, but neither may they harass anyone.” (GLBU)

6.8.3 Education and Training

Gay and lesbian Service members mentioned the need for additional training both for leaders and the general population of Service members. They especially emphasized the importance of educating all levels of leadership on implementing the policy uniformly regardless of their personal views on repeal.

- “I would say that DoD should maybe have training for Senior Leadership so that they are able to better understand how to help their subordinates with the transition.” (GLBU)

- “Educate the leadership—that is the key to all new policy... Making sure leadership understands and enforces the policy regardless of personal bias is very important.” (GLBU)

Some gay and lesbian Service members offered specific suggestions about the content and format of any training that might be offered to leaders. A few suggested that DADT repeal training be incorporated into already existing leadership or diversity workshops. A couple further recommended that training on how to implement repeal of DADT be modeled on current sexual harassment programs.

- “I think if you set up diversity training workshops and led ethical discussions on this or that behavior regarding things like race, gender or sexual orientation it would make huge improvements. Just include it in a Basic Officer Leadership Training Course that we already take (called BOLTC in the Navy). Maybe a yearly training course involving a discussion led by a designated leader.” (GLBU)
- “I think the DOD should model how they teach, the Sexual Assault Response Program is a great program, it has been effective in Preventing and Reporting Sexual Assaults.” (GLBU)

While stressing the importance of educating the leadership, Gay and lesbian Service members also recommended that training and educational activities be provided to all to defuse stereotypes about gays and lesbians, identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, teach tolerance, and address workplace ethics. Some gay and lesbian Service members thought this training content could be added to existing EO or Diversity training efforts, while others envisioned more extensive training focused solely on this issue. A few suggested holding an open forum, with gay and lesbian Service members as panelists, to facilitate greater understanding and openly discuss concerns heterosexual Service members might have with gays and lesbians in the military.

- [Training should include] “What constitutes sexual harassment, and what is acceptable behavior on the part of both gay and straight Service members.....what is appropriate behavior in close quarters. For example, to be staring at someone else while in the shower or at a urinal could be considered inappropriate or harassing behavior from a gay Service member.” (GLBU)
- “I was a member of the lesbian and gay association on campus. We provided training called ‘panels’ to classes and dorms which consisted of four open members who were there to just talk about any concerns people had. The people would prepare questions in advance that would be read out anonymously and this allowed for all issues to be addressed. I found that as a result of this kind of training, people learned that gays and lesbians were really just like anyone else.” (GLBU)

6.8.4 Policy Changes

There was some debate among Service members as to whether additional policies are necessary to facilitate repeal of DADT. A few heterosexual Service members cautioned that the military will have to “change everything, regulation wise” and “more personnel are going to be required to implement the processes and procedures to handle situations that arise...” For the most part, gay and lesbian Service members thought most, if not all policies for dealing with the repeal of DADT are already in place.

- “I don’t think they need to segregate, or make any new rules. We already have good rules in place, if you don’t follow them you get kicked out, that’s just how it is.”(GLBU)
- “Using the same tools we currently have to air our grievances. The chain of command, programs like DAPA, Fleet and Family services etc. Nothing new needs to be created. Rather we can use the current tools that are available.”(GLBU)

6.8.5 Harassment and Hate Crimes

As noted earlier, gay and lesbian Service members were very concerned about the possibility that they might be subject to retaliatory acts of harassment or even hate crimes if DADT were to be repealed. Several gay and lesbian Service members argued that clear policies must be in place beforehand to protect Service members from such acts. They suggested that these policies might be implemented either by extending the UCMJ to include hate crimes and all forms of physical and sexual assault or amending the harassment policy to specifically include harassment based on sexual orientation.

- “Have and enforce a zero tolerance policy against hate crimes toward homosexuals. Give leaders the ability to act without restriction to enforce policies designed to ensure no hate based crimes are committed as a result of this repeal.”(GLBU)
- “I think that harassment policy within the working place is very important. Having been subject to countless acts of hazing, I think the first thing that needs to be tackled is the rights of LGBTQ to be free from harassment and receive the same support and protection others receive.”(GLBU)
- “Make the senior leadership aware of what is going on and ensure that all Service members know that hate crimes are punishable under the UCMJ. Sadly there is still going to be backlash. I still get crap from men due to the fact that I am a women and this is a “man’s world.”(GLBU)

Notwithstanding these concerns about implementation, many gay and lesbian Service members are confident that, in time, with clear policies and good leadership, the overall atmosphere towards gays and lesbians will eventually improve.

- “I think that as long as the military makes it clear that discriminatory behavior, acts of harassment and violence, intimidation or any other negative behaviors will absolutely not be tolerated, that gay and lesbian Service members will feel free to be themselves.”(GLBU)
- “In my Unit and the military as a whole, like racial slurs, the “gay” comments will continue unless individual unit’s commanding officers and the higher echelon endorse, enforce and educate an Equal Opportunity Policy towards all. Change is not going to happen overnight.” (GLBU)

6.8.6 Discrimination /Equal Opportunity (EO)

As noted in previous chapters, some heterosexual Service members expected an increase in unfounded EO complaints with repeal of DADT. For their part, some gay and lesbian Service members argued that sexual orientation should be added to the list of protected classes:

- “Enforcement of EO for gays and lesbians would help. Protected classes of people get the full enforcement of EO policies. However, we are not a protected class so these don’t apply to us. To be treated fair in light of the fact that I cannot help my sexual identity is perhaps the most important thing I can think of.”(GLBU)

Gay and lesbian Service members further argued that EO policies will need to address discrimination in its many forms, both subtle and overt.

- “I think that it would be important to ensure that soldiers were not isolated, treated differently, or mistreated because of their sexual orientation.” (GLBU)
- “It’s going to be run of the mill things that let you know your reporting senior doesn’t like you but aren’t big enough to register as outright abuse. For example, you’ll probably have to stand more than your share of late watches or weekend duties. Your FITREP/eval isn’t going to be as glowing as it should be. They might say something nasty to you once or twice behind closed doors (no witnesses) but that’ll be it.” (GLBU)

6.8.7 Benefits

Many Service members, regardless of sexual orientation, thought repeal of DADT will necessarily impact provision of benefits to partners of gay and lesbian Service members. Some heterosexuals assumed that benefits would automatically be extended to same-sex couples, and others cautioned the DOD to “work out details beforehand [as to] whether gay marriages will be accepted for eligibility for benefits.”

Gay and lesbian Service members expressed the desire to be eligible for at least some of the same family benefits as heterosexual families. At minimum, they argued for official recognition enabling their life partners to be granted hospital visitation rights and receive next-of-kin notification in emergencies.

- “I feel individuals who have a significant other of the same sex should be allowed to identify those individual as their next of Kin in the event of an emergency. That individual’s affection might mean the difference between life or death of that Service member.” (GLBU)
- “All I want is to be able to have my partner informed of what is going on with me, should I deploy. I want to be able to have them by my side at official functions. I want to be created equal not special.” (GLBU)
- “It would be wonderful to know that my family would be taken care of while I am deployed... I worry sometimes that I may lose my family and not be provided the same marriage counseling as others are given.” (GLBU)

Several Service members suggested that DOD look at how other militaries have dealt with this issue in developing a comprehensive benefits policy.

6.9 Summary

Taken as a whole, analysis of the confidential dialogs suggests the following overarching findings:

- **These GLBU Service members have a distinctive and powerful story to tell when it comes to the effects of the current DADT policy on their professional and personal lives as well as their views of the anticipated impact of repeal.**

It is clear that living under the weight of a policy that asks them to deny who they are as people and keep hidden their relationships with their partners and loved ones has taken a toll on these Service members, most of whom express a high level of commitment to

the values of military Service and military life and a great deal of pride in their work. Many feel they have been the victims of homophobic attitudes and practices, and that having to remain officially silent with others who may “suspect” their sexual orientation often reinforces the latter’s ability to unjustifiably discriminate against them. Far from the implication that GLBU Service members are really quite happy with the current policy and would rather not “rock the boat,” these GLBU dialog participants made it eminently clear they would welcome repeal, even though many recognize they may suffer the effects of a backlash at least at the beginning. The gays and lesbians who took part in these dialogs were all but unanimous in stressing the singular importance of clear, consistent and unambiguous leadership in successfully implementing the repeal, should it occur, and made several useful suggestions for training and education measures that might be taken.¹³

■ **The heterosexual Service members taking part in these dialogs expressed two rather distinctive sets of views on DADT repeal and implementation.**

As was true in previous chapters, the group that was more negative about the impact of repeal often based their views on religious and moral grounds, believing repeal of DADT would be inconsistent with American military values, is politically motivated, would violate their own rights to freedom of speech and religion, and would have negative consequences for the military and the country as a whole. If DADT is repealed, many expected flamboyant behavior on the part of gays and lesbians, with detrimental consequences for unit cohesion. If repeal does happen, some said they would likely leave the military. They emphasized the need for implementation of repeal not to be skewed in favor of gays and lesbians.

Those who had a more positive perspective on repeal—both heterosexuals and gays and lesbians—tended to regard repeal as a matter of civil rights and non-discrimination, and also cited religious convictions as the basis for their views. Most believed that repeal will not have deleterious consequences on unit cohesion or military, and in the long run, will be a benefit to the military and the wider society. They argued that strong, consistent leadership as well as clear policy guidance will be the crux of making repeal work.

¹³ Those gay and lesbian Service members who took part in these dialogs may not represent the full range of views of all GLBU Service members.

CHAPTER 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In looking at the findings across all of the qualitative data sources, we discerned two relatively distinct views on DADT and its potential repeal. Each view we describe represents an “ideal type,” that is, some individuals expressed more ambivalence about integrating gays and lesbians into the military than either of the two positions might suggest, while others simply did not seem to care one way or the other. Yet those individuals who stood at either end of the spectrum frequently expressed the same constellation of beliefs and values as others who occupied a similar position.

7.1 Those Holding More Positive Views of Repeal

Those who were more positive in their views of repeal of DADT and its likely impact tended to see repeal as a matter of civil rights and justice for gays and lesbians, believing the time for repeal has come, or is indeed long overdue. Some of these individuals also invoked religious and moral bases for their position, noting that they believe everyone is created equal or that it is not for us to judge because no one is free of sin. These Service members also based their positive views of repeal on what they saw as bedrock American values of tolerance and equality, as well as core military values of honesty and integrity, pointing to the contradiction of asking gays and lesbians to take an oath upholding honesty yet essentially lie (or at least keep silent) about who they are.

For most of those with a positive view, repeal of DADT was seen as comparable to past efforts to integrate African Americans and women. They pointed out that in both those prior efforts initial resistance gave way to acceptance, and the military emerged stronger overall for having shown the capacity and commitment to achieving greater diversity. Some with more positive views of repeal predicted that in time—more quickly than many might imagine—acceptance of gay and lesbian Service members will simply become the norm.

Those who looked more favorably upon repeal were also more apt to say that the military should be in the forefront of support for social change. They often pointed to the current presence of gays and lesbians as evidence that “we are already doing it,” so believed that repeal would not really change much in terms of military functioning. In effect, insofar as many Service members have already served with others they suspect or know to be gay or lesbian, those with a more positive view of repeal argued that much of the work of repeal has already been done. What remains is just to

remove the legal prohibition on “telling”—in essence, to acknowledge the reality that gays and lesbians are already serving honorably.

While admitting that repeal might provoke initial backlash against gays and lesbians who “come out,” and possibly temporarily impair unit cohesion, these Service members believed that in the long run things would smooth out with effective leadership. Those holding positive views of the likely impact of repeal stressed that gays and lesbians have already shown themselves to be competent and honorable Service members, and in the greater scheme of things, the ability to do the job matters more than sexual orientation.

From an interpersonal perspective, Service members who held more positive views of repeal and its expected impact expressed awareness of and empathy for the emotional and social costs that DADT exacts on gay and lesbian Service members and their families. Based on their own personal and professional experiences, many of these persons recognized the burden that having to keep silent places on gay and lesbians. Several Service members with more positive view of repeal and its effects indicated that their own ability to deliver services to gays and lesbians had been impeded by DADT, and pointed to problems with alcoholism and suicide that might have been rectified had the gay and lesbian Service members been able to talk openly about their problems.

7.2 Those Holding More Negative Views of Repeal

Those with more negative views on repeal of DADT often saw it as an infringement of their own and their chaplains’ rights to freedom of religion and freedom of speech, and as part of a larger “political agenda” foisted on the military by civilian society. They also tended to take the position that repeal is a poorly timed “distraction,” and would be a considerable drain on valuable resources at a time when the country is at war and resources are increasingly scarce.

Many of those with more negative views of repeal invoked religion—specifically the view that homosexuality is “sinful” or immoral—as the basis for their position. They also tended to reject comparisons between repeal of DADT and prior efforts to integrate African Americans and women on the grounds that, unlike race and gender, homosexuality is a “choice,” and therefore something that individuals could—and presumably, should—change.

This group of individuals foresaw a range of negative consequences for morale and military effectiveness should repeal take place. While generally believing repeal would have a negative impact on unit cohesion overall, some who were more negative about repeal nevertheless thought there would be less impact on task cohesion, or the ability to get the job done, as compared with social cohesion, or the ability to get along with one another socially. They also thought that repeal would negatively impact the ability to recruit new members, especially as many potential recruits are from conservative parts of the United States and attracted to the military because it reflects a distinctive set of traditional, Christian values. Some said they would leave the military if repeal happens.

Both those Service members who had positive and those who held negative views of repeal stressed the importance of clear guidance and effective leadership in successful implementation, and asserted the imperative that as little as possible be left “up to interpretation.” While both groups used language about “fairness and equity” in implementation, their concerns were at bottom quite different: Those with more positive views of repeal tended to express concerns that the process of implementation might be undermined by leaders who overtly or subtly communicated the message that they were opposed to repeal. Those with more negative views of repeal were instead concerned that repeal would set in motion a process of favoritism towards gays and lesbians and reverse discrimination against heterosexuals.

In the sections that follow, we describe salient variations in perspectives on the impact of repeal as well as views on and recommendations for implementation by the respondent’s self-identified sexual orientation, gender, and other attributes.

7.3 Sexual Orientation

All the self-identified gay and lesbian Service members in our data sources made it clear they would welcome repeal of DADT, even though many anticipated suffering the effects of a backlash at least at the beginning. Like some of their heterosexual counterparts, the GLBU Service members believed that repeal is a matter of rectifying discrimination and thought in the long run the military and the country will be better and stronger for having addressed the issue. These Service members’ views of the likely impact of repeal were firmly grounded in their experiences of living under DADT. While expressing strong commitment to military Service and core military values, these gay and lesbian Service members told a story of the many costs of having to hide their sexual orientation and their relationships with partners and loved ones. They described the complexities of deciding whether to

disclose their sexual orientation to other Service members and the fear of having their sexual orientation revealed and being separated from the military despite being more than competent at their jobs. Some felt they had been the victims of homophobic attitudes and practices, which had carried over to their job performance ratings and prospects for promotion.

GLBU respondents also discussed the negative impact of DADT on their personal relationships. They pointed to the many cautions and subterfuges they have had to observe even in small, seemingly inconsequential matters heterosexuals take for granted, such as keeping a family picture on their desk or talking about what they did over the weekend. Most said that if DADT were repealed, they did not intend to “come out” to everyone they meet or to carry themselves any less professionally; it would simply be a relief to be able to share the personal and familial side of their lives with their colleagues and to bring their partners and families to social functions if they so choose. Several also said that repeal would greatly increase the likelihood of their remaining in the military, by removing the stress and anxiety caused by constant fear of “being found out” and the conflict many faced of having to choose between a military career and their relationships. Gay and lesbian respondents argued that their partners should have access to at least some of the same benefits as heterosexual spouses. They stressed the importance of clear and unambiguous leadership, recommending that leaders be trained on how to implement repeal regardless of their personal views on the subject and on the importance of adopting a “zero tolerance” policy towards acts of harassment. Some GLBU Service members also suggested that all Service members be given the opportunity to learn more about homosexuality in order to defuse stereotypes and promote greater tolerance of differences.

7.4 Gender

Regardless of gender, Service members who believed that repeal will have a negative effect were just as passionate in their views as those arguing that repeal is a matter of justice and civil rights. Males and females held views on both sides of the issue. But as a group, the female inbox correspondents were more likely than their male counterparts to offer comments expressing a positive view of repeal. The family members who participated in the family focus groups, family IEFs and Family Readiness Group leadership discussions were mostly female. And while some participants were vociferously opposed to repeal, overall the family groups tended towards a positive view of repeal and its impact. In particular, those with views largely positive towards repeal expressed a great deal of empathy for the situation of gay and lesbian Service members and their families, and argued that

the latter should receive the same benefits as their heterosexual counterparts. By the same token, the family members who looked more negatively upon repeal—also mostly females—tended to see gays and lesbian as “the other,” rejecting the idea that gay and lesbian families were essentially like theirs in any way. Participants in these groups offered a number of concrete suggestions for implementation, including recommendations of educational materials and curricula that could be employed in DoD schools and disseminated in the wider community.

7.5 Other Differences

In the military small focus groups, we found some differences between enlisted personnel and officers, largely in the terms in which the participants talked about implementation of repeal and leadership. In brief, officers tended to speak about the overall challenges posed by implementation of repeal while enlisted personnel looked at the issues in more personal or individual terms. Similar differences were also reflected in the tone and content of the IEFs as compared with the leadership discussions. The only other differences we found, restricted to a very few topical areas, were by Service, where Marines emerged among inbox correspondents as holding more negative views about repeal and its impact than did members of the other Services.

7.6 Final Considerations

These conclusions are crafted from a “mosaic” of qualitative sources, each of which had its respective strengths and weaknesses. Our hope is that the melding together of these sometimes disparate sources represents a useful and mutually reinforcing synthesis, deepening our knowledge of Service members’ and family members’ perspectives on the anticipated impact and implementation of repeal of DADT. The conclusions are certainly stronger than they would have been had they been based on only one or two of the sources alone. Nonetheless, because none of these sources is strictly representative, it is important not to generalize the report findings to all Service members or family members. Rather, the reader should use the insights from these findings to flesh out a richer understanding of the varied factors that contribute to views on the highly charged subject of DADT and its potential repeal, as well as recommended strategies for implementation should it occur.

Appendix A
Military Service Member Small Focus Group Script

CRWG Military Service Member Small Focus Group Script

Briefing

Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ and this is my colleague _____. We are with the Department of Defense Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG) directed by the Secretary of Defense to conduct a comprehensive review of the issues associated with repeal of the law commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” We have asked you here to gain your perspective on any issues associated with repeal and to explore what changes would have to be made if the law were to be repealed. Congress has inserted the language to repeal the law into the National Defense Authorization Act contingent on the results of the review. This focus group is an opportunity for you to share your insights directly with the CRWG. If repeal does occur, your input and comments today will be important in helping the CRWG provide answers as to how a repeal should or might work. First, let’s see a show of hands of how many of you attended an IEF about this subject? [MOD: If all, reduce background explanation, BUT explain VOLUNTARY and reiterate DADT STILL IN EFFECT.]

This is a **voluntary focus group**. You were chosen at random to be invited to participate. If you prefer not to sit in, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate. **YOU WILL NOT BE PENALIZED** for failure to participate. We do encourage you to speak if you have something to say.

- **Why are we conducting focus groups?** In his State of the Union Address, the President called on Congress to repeal the law commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Repeal would mean that Service members will no longer be separated from the armed forces because they have engaged in homosexual conduct, which includes saying they are gay. The “Don’t Ask” part of the policy means that Service members aren’t asked their sexual orientation when they join the military and commanders are only allowed to ask if there is credible information that a Service member engaged in homosexual conduct. The “Don’t Tell” part means that if Service members reveal their homosexual relationships or sexual orientation, they will be discharged.
- The CRWG will examine the issues associated with a repeal of the law, should it occur, and will include an implementation plan that addresses impacts of repeal. We are studying potential impacts on such issues as unit cohesion, military readiness and effectiveness and recruiting/retention, as well as how to best manage such impacts during implementation.

Ground Rules

Next I want to go over a few **ground rules for this focus group**:

- **First, and most important, this is not a confidential forum. So, please do *not* identify your own sexual orientation or identify anyone else you believe may be gay or lesbian.** The current “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law is still in effect. Are there any questions about this before we move on?

- **Please respect each others' opinions.** We know you may have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. We urge you to be open and honest. Speak freely - but with the respect and dignity befitting your service.
- **If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so.** In addition, you can either share how you feel personally or how others you have talked to feel about the issue. [] will be taking notes. We will record comments but not names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report.
- **Though this is not a confidential forum, it is a non-attribution session.** After you leave today's session, please do not discuss what was said here with anyone, including the media. This will help us protect the information shared today. Please turn off cell phones and other recording devices.
- **Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum.** I will watch the time so we will be able to cover all questions and keep this session to one hour. Any additional questions before we begin?

I. Past Experiences Serving with Individuals Believed to Be Gay or Lesbian

Let's begin with a few general questions about your past experiences.

In your time in the military, have you served in a unit with someone you believed to be gay or lesbian? (*Moderator notes percentage of the group.*)

- For those of you who have served with someone you believed to be gay or lesbian, did the experience have an impact on the effectiveness of your unit—or was there no impact? Please explain.

II. Issues Associated With Repeal/How to Address in Implementation

Let's now discuss some areas that might be affected if "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" were repealed. I'll also be asking your opinions about what steps could be taken to reduce any possible negative effects of a repeal.

Unit Cohesion

Let's start with **unit cohesion**. Unit cohesion is the bonding of members of a unit. There are two elements to unit cohesion. The **task element** involves the shared commitment to work together as a team to achieve common goals and accomplish the mission. The **social element** has to do with the unit members getting along with one another, hanging out together and enjoying one another's company.

Taking both the team work and social elements into account, **overall**, how would allowing Service members who have revealed they are gay or lesbian to serve impact your unit's cohesion? Would cohesion increase, decrease, or stay the same following repeal? Please explain. IF NOT DISCUSSED, PROBE ON:

- Perceived impact on task-related cohesion (positive, negative, no change);
 - Would that change your perception of the ability of gay Service member to get the job done? Explain.
 - Would a repeal affect the level of trust between straight and gay Service members? Explain.
- Perceived impact on camaraderie or getting along socially (pos., neg., no change)
 - Would gay or lesbian Service member be included socially?
 - What differences, if any, are there between work and non-work situations?
 - How does socializing off-duty affect unit cohesion?
 - If gay and lesbian Service members were not included in off-duty socializing, what effect, if any, would that have on unit cohesion?

If unit cohesion is both about getting the job done and getting along socially, would the things you just talked about be **different in combat or deployment situations** as **compared with home station/garrison situations**? Please explain.

- How does unit cohesion affect readiness and military effectiveness?
- Do you think gay or lesbian Service members should be prohibited from certain jobs/communities? If so, which jobs/communities and why?

How do you think repeal would affect the **relationship to the wider, non-military community**? (Probe on *cultural differences in OCONUS situations, probe for both positive and negative impact*)

- What could be done to help strengthen relationships/reduce any negative impact of repeal on relationships with the wider, non-military community? (Probe on *what unit leaders versus other members could do*)

(If not already addressed) Factors up and down the **chain of command** as well as among co-workers can affect unit cohesion. If you had a superior who you knew was gay or lesbian, would that affect how you interacted with him/her? How? (Probe on *effect on level of respect for and trust in superior, perceived ability to perform job, willingness to go to a superior for advice or a personal problem; probe for both positive and negative*)

- What could be done to improve the situation or help reduce any negative perceptions of that leader? (Probe on *who would be taking such actions*)

Now let's talk about the impact that a potential repeal would have on **privacy- related** issues. *(Probe on which areas are seen as most critical to privacy)*

- What concerns would you have about housing/billeting/berthing with or near Service members who revealed they were gay or lesbian? *(Probe on whether would want separate housing, probe on housing issues specific to more rustic and/or OCONUS situations).*
- What concerns would you have about showering with/ around Service members who revealed they were gay or lesbian? *(Probe on whether would want opportunity to shower separately, probe on issues specific to more rustic and/or OCONUS situations)*
- What are some specific things that could be done to address your concerns in these areas (MOD – includes housing, berthing, showering)?

Finally, unit cohesion builds up over time as Service members get to know each other and their capabilities. When a **new person** comes into the unit, how, if at all, would that **integration process** be affected if he/ she had revealed they were gay/ lesbian? *(Probe on effects on speed of rebuilding cohesion, task versus social cohesion distinction; probe on positive and negative)*

- Would there be any difference if this occurs while deployed (down range) or at your permanent duty station (in garrison)?
- What could be done to help integrate new members/help reduce any negative impacts on unit cohesion? *(Probe on what unit leader versus other members could do)*

Implementation: Of all the issues related to unit cohesion that we have discussed *(insert examples)* which would be the most important ones to deal with right away if DADT were repealed? Why?

Recruitment and Retention

Now let's talk about recruiting and retaining Service members.

- Do you think it would be easier, more difficult, or no different for your Service to recruit new Service members after a repeal? Please explain. *(Probe for both positive and negative impact)*
- Would repeal of the law cause you to change your plans regarding staying in the military? Do you think that other people are going to change their plans regarding staying in the military if a repeal occurs?
- Would repeal make you more or less likely to recommend military service to someone who is considering joining, or have no impact on your recommendation? Please explain.

III. Impact on Gays and Lesbians

Now I'd like to shift the emphasis a little. How do you think a repeal of DADT might affect gay and lesbian Service members themselves? PROBE IF NOT DISCUSSED:

- Would you expect gays and lesbians to behave differently if the law were repealed? (*For example, flamboyance, parades, dressing differently, pushing their lifestyle*)? Does this apply both on duty and off duty?
- Would you expect any positive impacts on gays and lesbians (for example, not having to lie about their orientation) if the law were repealed? Why/why not? Please explain.

IV. Leadership

We have heard your views on how you think repeal of DADT would affect many things as well as some suggestions about what can be done to address various issues. In this final section, we would like to focus on your thoughts on what leaders could do to make the process as smooth as possible if repeal does occur. (*For more senior groups, follow up with: What leadership efforts will have the greatest impact on fostering a command climate that successfully integrates Service members regardless of sexual orientation?*) (*For all: Probe on who they perceive as their leaders in this context.*) *If not raised, probe for the following*:

- *Setting clear standards of expected conduct*
- *Ensuring respectful treatment*
- *Leading by example*
- *Addressing issues through education and training*
- *Taking on problems quickly and effectively*
- *Dealing with negative reactions to policy change*
- *Raising issues to higher levels*

V. Other Issues

Is there anything else you'd like to say about the possible repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" -- or what should be included in the implementation plan if repeal were to occur?

Closing Remarks

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. As I mentioned at the beginning, we will treat all of your comments as non-attribution. We will not link your name to any of the specific comments you made today. Please also respect that non-attribution when you leave here today. Our goal is to provide the best data possible and you have helped us greatly today with your comments and insights. Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix B
Family Small Focus Group Script

CRWG Family Small Focus Group Script

BRIEFING

Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ and this is _____. We both are from Westat, and are working on behalf of the Department of Defense Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG). This is the working group the Secretary of Defense directed to examine the issues associated with a repeal of the law known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Congress has inserted the language to repeal the law into the National Defense Authorization Act contingent on the results of the review. This focus group is an opportunity for you to share your insights directly with the CRWG. If repeal does occur, your input and comments today will be important in helping the CRWG provide answers as to how a repeal should or might work.

First, let’s see a show of hands of how many of you attended an IEF on this subject. [Obtain count. If ALL, MOD: Reduce background explanation, but **emphasize VOLUNTARY and DADT STILL IN EFFECT.**] Let me define this law, so that we have a common understanding. The “Don’t Ask” part means that service members aren’t asked their sexual orientation when they join the military and commanders are only allowed to ask if there is credible information that a service member engaged in homosexual conduct. The “Don’t Tell” part means that if service members reveal their homosexual relationships or sexual orientation, they will be discharged. We have asked you here to gain your perspective on issues, if any, associated with a repeal of this law. Your help is essential to our review.

This is a **voluntary** focus group. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to; and if you decide not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave. We expect this discussion to last no more than one hour.

Let’s begin by talking about why we are conducting focus groups. In his State of the Union Address, the President called on Congress to repeal the law commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Repeal would mean that service members would no longer be separated from the armed forces because they have engaged in homosexual conduct, which includes saying they are gay. The CRWG is conducting this study to examine the issues associated with a repeal of the law and will also include a plan recommending changes to be put into effect should a repeal occur. To help us in our work, we will be getting your views today about how you think a repeal would affect your spouse’s military service, the military environment, and your family, and what issues or concerns you think leadership should address first if a repeal were to occur. This focus group is an opportunity for you to share your insights directly with the military’s senior leadership.

GROUND RULES

I want to thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group and go over a few ground rules:

- First, and most important, this is **not a confidential** forum so please do *not* identify the sexual orientation of anyone currently serving in the military. The “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law is still in effect and could affect a military member’s service if it were revealed he/she is gay or lesbian. Are there any questions about this before we move on?
- Please **respect** each others’ opinions. We know you may have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that’s why we are here today. We urge you to be open and honest.
- If you don’t feel you have anything to contribute, there’s no pressure for you to do so. _____ will be helping us to take notes. **We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information.** Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report.
- In providing your answers, we ask that you put on your “military spouse” hat even if you yourself have served or are currently serving in the military. We are conducting other focus groups with Service members and really need to hear the spouses’ perspectives in this setting.
- Though this is not a confidential forum, it is a non-attribution session. After you leave today’s session, **please do not discuss** what was said here with anyone including the media. This will help us protect the information shared today. Please turn off cell phones and other recording devices.
- Please **keep the crosstalk to a minimum.** Any (additional) questions?
- I have several questions to ask you today. I will watch the time so we will be able to cover all questions and keep this session to one hour. Before we begin, I’d like a show of hands: How many of you live on base? How many live off base?

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH GAYS AND LESBIANS

1. Let’s have another show of hands. How many of you have a close personal relationship with someone who is gay or lesbian? (Facilitator notes percentage of the group.)

FAMILY ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH REPEAL

Let's now discuss some of the possible issues associated with repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The first questions are about issues that affect you and your family.

2. What, if any, concerns do you have about [FILL] if the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law were repealed?

[FILL CATEGORIES]

- **Your own or your family members' health or health care?** [PROBE IF NEEDED]
 - Timely access to medical services
 - Changes to health insurance premiums or benefits
- **Base housing** [PROBE IF NEEDED]
 - Gay families living next door
 - Maintaining an appropriate atmosphere for your family
- **Your employment** [PROBE IF NEEDED]
 - Working alongside gay partner of military member
- **Children**
 - Do you think a repeal would have any impact on your children? Explain.
 - Child Care
 - Education, e.g., curriculum changes in base schools
- **Community life on base**
 - Volunteerism (willingness to volunteer for activities)
 - Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)
 - Facilities (exchange, commissary)
 - Religion - One issue often raised in forums such as this involves the impact on chaplains. There are chaplains on the Working Group who are focusing on this issue. How concerned are you that a repeal would impact the military's ability to provide chaplains who represent your belief structure? Explain
 - Diversity
 - Would a repeal impact your attendance at social events? Explain.
- (If OCONUS) **Integration into non-military community life**
- **Deployment Readiness**
 - If gay and lesbian partners were included in family readiness groups, would that affect your attendance?
 - Would your participation in a family readiness group change if it was being led by a gay or lesbian?
- **Your financial situation**

3. "If "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is repealed, recognized same sex partners will likely be ineligible for a number of military benefits, such as medical, dental and certain housing and

allowance benefits, because of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Other than those benefits already mentioned, are there aspects of being a military spouse that we need to consider for recognized partners of gay and lesbian Service members?"

- Next of Kin notification?
- Compassion in medical situations?
- Transferring of GI benefits?
- Anything else?

IMPACT ON SPOUSE'S MILITARY SERVICE

4. Now let's talk about how a repeal of DADT might affect your spouse's military service. Overall, what effect do you think a repeal would have on your spouse? [PROBE ON]

- Stress level of spouse at work? At home?
- Any special concerns about your spouse's safety if repeal were to occur?

RETENTION/RECOMMENDATION

5. Again, I would like a show of hands. If the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law were repealed, and gays and lesbians were permitted to serve without fear of being separated, would that affect your spouse's decision to stay in or get out of the military? Explain.

- Would repeal of the law affect your support for your spouse staying in or getting out of the military? Explain.

6. Would a repeal of the law change your willingness to recommend military service to someone who is considering joining? Or would repeal have no impact on your recommendation? Explain.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

7. [ONLY ASK IF POSITIVE ASPECTS NOT ADDRESSED ABOVE] We have focused on some of the concerns you might have if the law were repealed. What positive effects can you think of if gay service members no longer had to hide their sexual orientation?

8. Is there anything you believe is unique to the issue of integrating gays and lesbians into the military that is not true for other groups? (*Probe on perceived parallels or lack of parallels with Service's past experiences with racial integration and integration of women*)
9. We have discussed several issues today, including ____, ____, and _____. What do you think is the most important issue that leaders should deal with right away if DADT were repealed? Why?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about this issue that we have not already addressed?

CLOSING REMARKS

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. As I mentioned at the beginning, we will treat all of your comments as non-attribution. Names and any other identifying characteristics or information will not be shared with DOD, and will not be linked to any of the specific comments you made today. Please also respect that non-attribution when you leave here today. Our goal is to provide the best data possible and you have helped us greatly today with your comments and insights. Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix C
Military Service Member Small Focus Group
Note Taking Template

MILITARY FOCUS GROUP NOTES TEMPLATE

UCFG.I.01

Group ID #

Name of Moderator

Name of Note taker(s)

Date, time of focus group:

Location of Focus Group:

Service:

Pay grade group(s):

Number of participants/ # of females

Served with Gays/Lesbians

Attended IEF

UCFG.S01.a

000 **PAST EXPERIENCE WITH GAYS AND LESBIANS**

000 **PAST EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS BELIEVED TO BE GAY OR LESBIAN**

ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.a

000 **UNIT COHESION**

000 **OVERALL IMPACT ON UNIT COHESION**

ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.a.1

000 **Impact on getting the job done (task cohesion)**

ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.a.2

000 **Impact on camaraderie/getting along socially**

ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.b

000 **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEPLOYED/COMBAT AND IN GARRISON**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S03.a

000 **IMPACT ON READINESS/EFFECTIVENESS**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S03.e

000 **PROHIBITED FROM CERTAIN JOBS/COMMUNITIES**
ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.c.1

000 **RELATIONSHIP TO NON-MILITARY COMMUNITY**
ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.c.2

000 **Suggestions for reducing impact on relationship to non-military community**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S02.e

000 **CHAIN OF COMMAND ISSUES**
ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.e.1

000 **Suggestions for reducing impact on chain of command**
ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.d.1

000 **CONCERNS ABOUT HOUSING/BILLETING/BERTHING**
ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.d.2

000 **CONCERNS ABOUT SHOWERING (IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE)**
ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.d.3

000 **Suggestions for addressing privacy concerns**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S02.f

000 **IMPACT ON INTEGRATION OF NEW MEMBERS**
ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S02.f.1

000 **Suggestions for integrating new members**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S02.g

000 **PRIORITY UNIT COHESION ISSUES FOR LEADERS**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S05.a

000 **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

000 **ABILITY TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S05.b

000 **PLANS FOR STAYING IN THE MILITARY (RETENTION)**
ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S05.c

000 **RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHERS**

ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S06.b

000 **IMPACT ON GAYS AND LESBIANS**

000 **IMPACT OF REPEAL ON GAYS AND LESBIANS?**

FG.S06.a

000 **Would gays and lesbians act differently? On/off duty? (If different from above)**

ENTER DATA HERE

UCFG.S06.b

000 **Any positive impact on gays/lesbians? (If different from above)**

ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S07.a

000 **LEADERSHIP**

000 **LEADERSHIP EFFORTS WITH GREATEST IMPACT?**

ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S07.b

000 **WHO ARE THE LEADERS IDENTIFIED BY THIS GROUP?**

ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S08.a

000 **OTHER ISSUES**

000 **ANY ADDITIONAL ISSUES**

ENTER DATA HERE

FG.S09.a

000 COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS

000 *In this section, please briefly summarize observations potentially relevant to the interpretation of this focus group, which we might not get from the notes alone. Please include concrete examples, if possible).*

000 TONE AND FEEL OF THE GROUP (e.g., subdued, argumentative)?

ENTER DATA HERE

000 EXPRESSION OF VIEWS – group open to voicing/hearing diverse opinions?

ENTER DATA HERE

000 DEGREE TO WHICH ONE PERSON OR SUBGROUP DOMINATED THE DISCUSSION

ENTER DATA HERE

000 RELEVANT BODY LANGUAGE CUES (e.g., rolling of eyes, sub-groups, etc)

ENTER DATA HERE

000 ANYTHING ELSE?

ENTER DATA HERE

000 Physical Setting: Brief description of setting in which focus group is taking place (e.g. type of building,, size and shape of room, arrangement of furniture, condition of the facilities, distracting noises, etc)

000 Seating Arrangement - Please draw the seating arrangement and label participants by Number/Gender (e.g., Participant 1, Male; Participant 2,Female; etc).

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing the seating arrangement of the focus group. The box is currently blank.

Appendix D
Family Small Focus Group Note Taking Template

FAMILY Focus Group Notes Template (Revised 7/7/10)

Family Focus Group Note Taking Template

FAMFG.I.01

Group ID #

Name of Moderator

Name of Note taker(s)

Date, time of focus group:

Location of Focus Group:

Service:

Number of participants/ # of females

Close Personal Relationship with Gays/Lesbians

FAMFG.S01.a

000 PAST EXPERIENCE WITH GAYS AND LESBIANS

000 PAST EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS BELIEVED TO BE GAY OR LESBIAN (IF MORE THAN COUNT RECORDED ABOVE).

ENTER DATA HERE

FAMFG.S04.b

000 CONCERNS ABOUT REPEAL

000 YOUR OWN OR YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS' HEALTH OR HEALTH CARE

ENTER DATA HERE

000 BASE HOUSING

ENTER DATA HERE

000 YOUR EMPLOYMENT

ENTER DATA HERE

000 CHILDREN

ENTER DATA HERE

FAMILY Focus Group Notes Template (Revised 7/7/10)

000 COMMUNITY LIFE ON BASE

ENTER DATA HERE

000 INTEGRATION INTO NON-MILITARY COMMUNITY LIFE

ENTER DATA HERE

000 DEPLOYMENT READINESS

ENTER DATA HERE

000 YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION

ENTER DATA HERE

FAMFG.S09.a

000 EXTENSION OF OTHER ASPECTS OF BEING A MILITARY SPOUSE

ENTER DATA HERE

FAMFG.S02.a

000 CONCERNS ABOUT EFFECT ON SPOUSE'S MILITARY SERVICE

000 STRESS LEVEL

ENTER DATA HERE

000 SPOUSE'S SAFETY

ENTER DATA HERE

000 FINANCIAL RESOURCES NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ENTER DATA HERE

FAMILY Focus Group Notes Template (Revised 7/7/10)

FAMFG.S03.a

ooo RECRUITMENT and RETENTION

ooo EFFECT OF REPEAL ON SPOUSE'S DECISION TO REMAIN OR LEAVE
ENTER DATA HERE

FAMFG.S03.b

**ooo EFFECT OF REPEAL ON SPOUSE'S SUPPORT FOR MILITARY SPOUSE
STAYING IN OR GETTING OUT**
ENTER DATA HERE

FAMFG.S03.c

ooo WILLINGNESS TO RECOMMEND MILITARY TO OTHERS
ENTER DATA HERE

FAMFG.S07.a

ooo SUMMARY

ooo POSITIVE EFFECTS OF REPEAL
ENTER DATA HERE

**ooo UNIQUE ISSUES OF INTEGRATING GAYS AND LESBIANS IN TO THE
MILITARY**
ENTER DATA HERE

FAMILY Focus Group Notes Template (Revised 7/7/10)

000 PRIORITY ISSUES FOR LEADERS TO ADDRESS

ENTER DATA HERE

000 ADDITIONAL ISSUES

ENTER DATA HERE

FAMFG.S08.a

000 COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS

000 *In this section, please briefly summarize observations potentially relevant to the interpretation of this focus group, which we might not get from the notes alone. Please include concrete examples, if possible).*

000 WHAT WAS THE TONE AND FEEL OF THE GROUP? (E.G., SUBDUED, HEATED, ARGUMENTATIVE, PASSIVE, ETC)

ENTER DATA HERE

000 EXPRESSION OF VIEWS – HOW OPEN WAS THE GROUP TO VOICING AND HEARING DIVERSE OPINIONS?

ENTER DATA HERE

000 DEGREE TO WHICH ONE PERSON OR SUBGROUP DOMINATED THE DISCUSSION

ENTER DATA HERE

000 RELEVANT BODY LANGUAGE CUES (E.G., ROLLING OF EYES, SUB-GROUPS, ETC)

ENTER DATA HERE

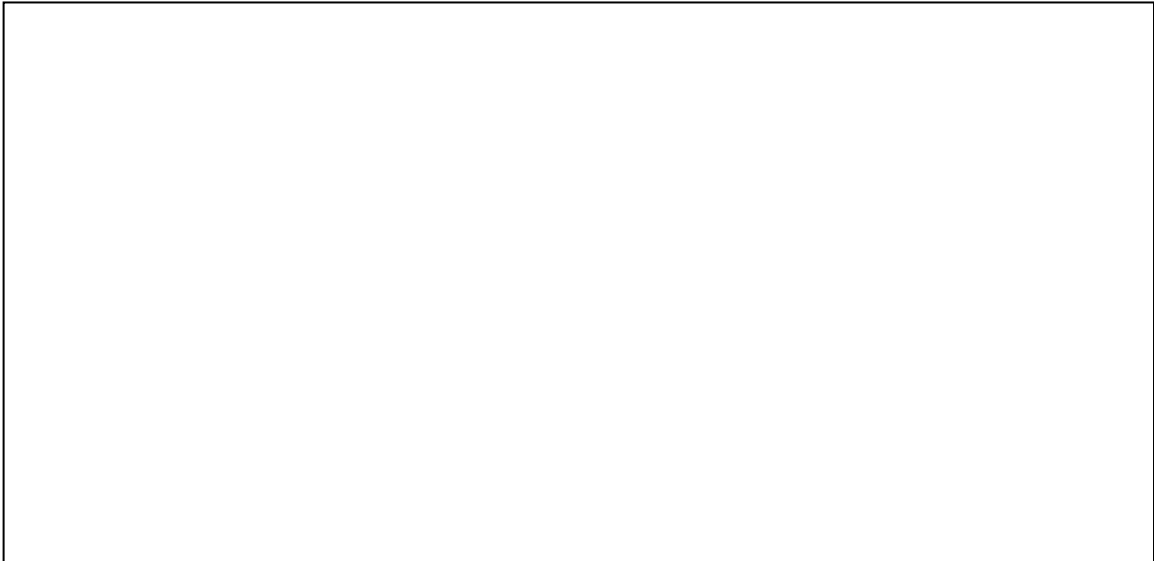
FAMILY Focus Group Notes Template (Revised 7/7/10)

000 ANYTHING ELSE?

ENTER DATA HERE

000 Physical Setting: Brief description of setting in which focus group is taking place (e.g. type of building,, size and shape of room, arrangement of furniture, condition of the facilities, distracting noises, etc)

000 Seating Arrangement - Please draw the seating arrangement and label participants by Number/Gender (e.g., Participant 1, Male; Participant 2,Female; etc).



Appendix E
**Note Taking Templates for Information Exchange
Forums (IEFs) and Leadership Discussions**

Note Taking Template for Leadership Discussions

LDR.I

Group ID #

Date and Time:

Location of Focus Group:

Names/Positions of Discussion Leaders:

(1)

(2)

(3)

Name of Note Taker:

Service:

Pay grade group(s)/Rank(s) of attendees:

Approximate number of attendees:

Approximate number of participants/ # of females:

PHYSICAL SETTING: Brief description of setting in which discussion is taking place (e.g. type of building, size and shape of room, arrangement of furniture, condition of the facilities, distracting noises, etc)

LDR.2

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS BY DISCUSSION LEADER (please identify): Brief overview of the introduction, including key points about the study, aims of the discussion, etc.

LDR.3

COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION NOTES: (please identify speaker, e.g., whether speaker is participant or Leader, gender of speaker)

- **Introductory Question to Participants** (if applicable):
- **Discussion Topic 1** (please note whether introduced by participant or Discussion Leader)
- **Discussion Topic 2** (please note whether introduced by participant or Discussion Leader)
- **Discussion Topic 3** (please note whether introduced by participant or Discussion Leader)
- **Discussion Topic 4** (please note whether introduced by participant or Discussion Leader)

- **Discussion Topic 5** (please note whether introduced by participant or Discussion Leader)
- **Discussion Topic 6** (please note whether introduced by participant or Discussion Leader)

LDR.5

SUMMARY *(if relevant, provide a brief (1-3 sentence) overall summary of the content of the discussion)*

LDR.6

COMMENTS ON CONTEXTUAL FACTORS (if relevant)

Please offer any comments/observations on contextual factors (e.g., group composition, physical setting, audibility, tone of audience questions) that might be relevant to the analysis team in making sense of this session. *(You may leave this space blank if you think there was nothing noteworthy in this regard.)*

Note Taking Template for Information Exchange Forums (IEFs)

IEF.1.1

Group ID #

Location

Date and Time of IEF

Note Taker

Service

Type of IEF: Active Duty/Family

Estimated Number of Attendees (approximate)

Physical Setting: Brief description of setting in which IEF is taking place (e.g. type of building,, size and shape of room, arrangement of furniture, condition of the facilities, distracting noises, etc)

IEF.2

POINTS MADE IN INITIAL BRIEFING:

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS RAISED BY AUDIENCE

IEF.3

COMMENT/QUESTION # 1

- **Response to # 1-**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 2

- **Response to # 2**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 3

- **Response to # 3**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 4

- **Response to # 4**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 5

- **Response to # 5**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 6

- **Response to # 6**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 7

- **Response to # 7**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 8

- **Response to # 8**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 9

- **Response to # 9**

COMMENT/QUESTION # 10

- **Response to # 10**

IEF.4

COMMENTS ON CONTEXTUAL FACTORS (if relevant)

Please offer any comments/observations on contextual factors (e.g., group composition, physical setting, audibility, tone of audience questions) that might be relevant to the analysis team in making sense of this session. (*You may leave this space blank if you think there was nothing noteworthy in this regard.*)

Appendix F
Confidential Communication Mechanism (CCM)
Dialogue Script

Confidential Communication Mechanism (CCM) Dialogue Script for Westat Moderators

Hello [alias], my name is [interviewer name]. Thank you for participating in this communication. Remember, all of your answers are confidential, and we will not share anything you tell us that could reveal your identity with anyone – not even the military. To help me in my talk with you, I wanted to ask some basic background questions first:

(All_1) What service are you in?

(All_2) Are you active or reserve component?

(All_3) Do you believe you have served with a gay or lesbian Service member?

Finally, I'd like to remind you that this is completely confidential. I'm going to ask you a question you should feel free not to answer, but I hope you will be comfortable answering:

(All_4) How would you describe your sexual orientation? (Are you straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or not sure?)

If straight or refused to answer, go to NOGL_X1, otherwise go to GL_X1.

CCM Dialog Topics for non-G/L/B service members:

(NOGL_X1) If DADT is repealed, what impacts do you think it will have on you, your family, your unit, and the military? What actions can DoD take to implement repeal effectively?

(NOGL_X2) Do you have religious or moral beliefs that impact your views of gays and lesbians or DADT and its potential repeal?

- a) What are those beliefs?
- b) Do you believe they will make it difficult to continue to serve in the military if DADT is repealed?
- c) How should DoD address these concerns in order to effectively implement repeal?

(NOGL_X3) Do you have any family members or long-time friends that are gay or lesbian?

- a) How is your relationship with that family member or friend? How is that impacted by that individual's sexual orientation?

(NOGL_X4) If DADT is repealed, will this affect your decision to stay in or get out of the military as a career?

- a) Why?
- b) If leaving, is there a specific issue that concerns you about the repeal of DADT that will lead you to leave the military?

(NOGL_X5) Are you currently married? Do you have children?

- a) If DADT is repealed, do you think your family will be impacted?

(NOGL_X6) Are there any other confidential experiences, thoughts or ideas about impact and implementation of repealing DADT that you would like to share today?

END CHAT

CCM Dialog Questions for gay and lesbian Service members:

(GL_X1) If DADT is repealed, what do you think will be the most important issue for the military to address?

(GL_X2) What would be the impact of this issue on you, your family, your unit, and the military?

(GL_X3) If DADT is repealed, what actions can DoD take to implement repeal effectively?

(GL_X4) To this point, have you revealed your sexual orientation to anyone else?

- a) Family members?
- b) Friends?
- c) Other Service members? (commanding officer, etc.)

(GL_X5) Are you currently in a relationship?

- a) Have you revealed that relationship to: family, friends, or other Service members?
- b) How is that relationship impacted by DADT?

(GL_X6) If DADT is repealed, will you be more open about your sexual orientation?

- a) If so, how, when and to whom?
- b) Do you have any thoughts on how you would go about disclosing your sexual orientation to others? When would you do so?

(GL_X7) Have you experienced or witnessed harassment, discrimination, or homophobia in the military as a direct result of DADT?

- a) (If answer to GL_X7 is yes) Please tell me more about those events.
- b) Do you have concerns about this increasing with a change in the policy?
- c) Do you believe this will decrease with a change in the policy?

(GL_X8) What effect, if any, do you believe the service you are in or your military occupational specialty has on your personal experience as a gay or lesbian service member?

(GL_X9) If DADT is repealed, how will this impact your plans for your military career?

- a) Why?
- b) What are your current plans? Do you have current plans to stay or leave?
What is causing that current decision?

(GL_X10) Are there any other confidential experiences, thoughts or ideas about impact and implementation of repealing DADT that you would like to share today?

Appendix G
Numbers of Focus Groups, IEFs and
Discussion Groups Conducted

Appendix G. Numbers of Focus Groups, IEFs and Discussion Groups Conducted

Table G-1 Service Member Focus Groups Conducted by Location

Location	Date	Number of Focus Groups
Ft. Eustis, VA	April 22	5
Langley AFB, VA	April 22	5
Norfolk, VA	April 23-24	13
Ft. Bragg, NC	April 27	5
Camp Lejeune, NC	April 28	5
Southern California	May 24-27	26
Colorado	June 15-17	18
Metro DC	June 18 & 22	8
Georgia/South Carolina	July 6-8	10
Hawaii	July 11-17	18
Staten Island, NY	July 12	2
Japan	August 1-6	2
Little Rock, AR	August 12-14	2
Total		119

Table G-2 Service Member IEFs and Discussion Groups Conducted by Location

Location	Date	IEFs	DGs
Ft. Eustis, Va	22-Apr	1	0
Norfolk, VA	April 23-24	1	0
Ft. Bragg, NC	27-Apr	5	0
Lackland AFB, TX	4-May	1	0
Ft. Sam Houston, TX	6-May	2	0
Ft. Hood TX	7-May	3	0
Southern California	May 24-27	8	6
Colorado	June 15-17	7	5
Metro DC	June 18 & 22	3	0
Georgia/South Carolina	July 6-8	3	1
Hawaii	July 11-17	17	2
Staten Island, NY	12-Jul	1	1
Japan	August 1-6	9	2
Chicago & Wisconsin	August 6-8	3	0
USCG Headquarters, DC	9-Aug	2	0
Little Rock, AR	August 12-14	4	0
Europe	August 12-21	11	5
Andrews AFB	31-Aug	0	1
USNA	1-Sep	0	3
USCG Academy	14-Sep	0	3
Total		81	29

Table G-3 Family Focus Groups Included in Analysis

Location	Date	Family Focus Groups	Family IEFs	Service Member IEFs with Spouses Attending¹	Discussion Groups
Camp Lejuene, NC	April 28	0	1	0	0
Southern California	May 24-27	0	3	0	1
Colorado	June 15-17	2	2	0	0
Georgia/South Carolina	July 6-8	0	0	0	0
Hawaii	July 11-17	3	3	0	0
Japan	August 1-6	2	0	3	3
Little Rock, AR	August 12-14	0	0	0	1
Europe	August 12-21	0	3	1	4
Totals		7	12	4	9

¹ This group of Information Exchange Forms (IEFs) was planned for Service members but some spouses also attended. Any input attributed to the spouse of a Service member was considered during analysis.

Appendix H
Cross-Site Analytic Memo

CROSS-SITE ANALYTIC MEMO 1

SUPPORT TO THE

DoD Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG)

ON THE IMPACT OF REPEALING THE

“DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL” POLICY

WESTAT

1600 RESEARCH BLVD

ROCKVILLE, MD 20850-3195

DATE

NOVEMBER 19, 2010

CROSS-SITE ANALYTIC MEMO 1

CROSS-SITE THEMES and FINDINGS: Texas, Virginia/North Carolina and California Visits

I Definitions of Unit Cohesion: two key elements

- A. Instrumental: **Working as a unit** to accomplish its mission.
 - 1. Team work, how well team comes together taking it from 1-100%; Team working as one to accomplish mission; being able to work together.
 - 2. Seamless coordination: ability of the unit to be stronger than individuals who make it up. Example: Doing an operation without caring who is on your right and who is on your left in an operational situation where you have to make a decision.
- B. Affective: **Group connectedness** - how well group members get along with each other in order to accomplish mission
 - 1. Trust in colleagues (in theater, no room for split-second hesitation)
 - 2. Communication
 - 3. Respect
 - 4. Shared bonds/ "Like a big family"

II Factors Affecting Unit Cohesion

- A. Size of unit: There was agreement that in general the smaller the unit, the stronger the cohesion. Participants differed in their views as to how repeal would interact with unit size. Some said it would be easier to incorporate a gay or lesbian Service member into a smaller, more closely-knit unit; others said just the opposite.
- B. Mission focus: There was general agreement that the more focused the mission, the more cohesive the unit. Some claimed that having a more focused mission would make it easier to accept gays and lesbians because "we are all in this together, we don't have time to worry about who is gay or not." Others claimed repeal would have a more negative impact in this setting because having a gay or lesbian member would be a distraction.
- C. Leadership: There was near-universal agreement that unit cohesion is strongly affected by the leaders' behaviors and skills, and that leaders will play the pivotal role in maintaining or strengthening unit cohesion if DADT is repealed. Leaders set the tone.
- D. Location: Degree of isolation or "self-sufficiency" relative to the wider (non-military) community: e.g., distinction was made between living off-base in San Diego, where unit members may be residentially and socially "scattered" after work hours, and living in Okinawa, where they are a much more self-contained entity.

- E. MOS: The importance of unit cohesion was thought to relate to the demands of different sorts of jobs, e.g., the need for unit cohesion was perceived to be lower for service jobs versus infantry.

III Impact of Potential Repeal on Overall Cohesion

- A. Conflict resolution: With repeal, some participants felt that more of the leaders' time would be taken up resolving conflicts and ambiguities surfacing around a previously closed set of issues.
- B. Disciplinary actions: Some also indicated more time would be occupied by disciplinary actions. Participants expressed concern about a possible increase in violence against gay Service members; many also expressed concern about a possible increase in sexual assaults by homosexuals against heterosexual service members.
- C. "Drama": Some voiced the view that repeal will open the way for "relationship dramas" of gays and lesbians "falling in and out of love." Others suggested that relationships are problematic for both straights and gays alike, particularly among the younger soldiers.
- D. Generational differences: A number of participants said repeal would be easier for the younger generation to accept because they are more flexible and accustomed to dealing with these issues in their lives. Others thought that some of the younger soldiers would have more difficulty because of their "immaturity."
- E. It all depends on the characteristics of the gay/lesbian individuals: Many participants were reluctant to generalize about the impact of repeal on unit cohesion because they believed the overriding factor would be the characteristics of the individuals in question (likeability, competence at doing job, social skills, etc.) rather than their sexual orientation *per se*.
- F. Professionalism: Many tied the anticipated impact on unit cohesion to the degree of professionalism exhibited by all of the unit's members, not just the gay soldier: the greater the professionalism, the less disruptive the impact. This, in turn (see below) was related to the leaders' firm and clear approach to this issue.

IV Impact on chain of command: two stances

- A. Many said repeal would not affect unit cohesion as related to chain of command because leadership is a function of the role/rank, not the individual person:
- "We follow orders."
 - "He (a gay commander) would still outrank me."
 - "[There would be no problem] as long as he's still behaving like a leader."

The one stipulation was that the leader would still need to demonstrate competence as a leader and adhere to standards of *professionalism* (i.e. treating everyone fairly).

- B. Others contended that repeal would have a negative impact on the chain of command. Issues included: concerns that repeal of DADT would trigger discrimination law suits, by gay or lesbian leaders who are not promoted; concerns that gays would bypass the chain of command to go to a leader with the same sexual orientation or that heterosexuals would do the same thing; lack of respect for gay/lesbian leaders; that having gay or lesbians in leadership positions would call into question the moral foundation of leadership.

V Formal/informal

In evaluating the likely impact of repeal overall, most participants differentiated between the formal or work-related side of military life, and the informal or social side. There was general agreement that repeal would have greatest impact on informal socializing. They differed in their views on the extent to which the work sides and social sides could be kept separate without affecting unit cohesion.

- A. Some participants predicted that gays and lesbians would (perhaps after an initial period of adjustment) be accepted on the work side and unit cohesion would not suffer unduly—private life should be kept private in any case, they said, regardless of a person’s sexual orientation. Again, the stipulation was that acceptance would come as long as the gay or lesbian individual “pulled his or her own weight” at work.
- B. Others felt that informal socializing is important to unit cohesion, so to the extent that repeal would put a damper on informal socializing or result in social ostracism or even hazing or violence against the gay or lesbian Service member, unit cohesion would be affected. Some also raised the issue of the imagined “dramas” that dealing with gay and lesbian relationship issues would create, which could create additional administrative burdens (paperwork related to disciplinary actions) for leaders.

VI Military Readiness/Effectiveness/Ability to Accomplish Mission:

- A. As with unit cohesion, views varied. Some participants felt repeal would have less impact in situations where Service members have to maintain razor-sharp focus on “getting the job done” and thus would have neither the time nor the inclination to worry about whether a fellow unit member is gay or lesbian. This, in turn, was tied to the idea (expressed in the unit cohesion section above), that what really matters is the gay or lesbian Service member’s ability to do their job; in the end readiness, effectiveness and the ability to accomplish the mission will not be compromised.
- B. Others expressed the view that these factors would be negatively impacted by repeal. Leaders would have to shoulder an increased workload and additional responsibilities related to resolving conflicts, dealing with EO issues, and so on. The notion of leaders

having to take on added responsibilities was connected to a related theme that repeal would be a “distraction,” taking time, energy and material resources away from more pressing mission-focused activities, particularly in war time.

- C. Several concerns were raised about the potential impact of repeal in deployment situations. These included: The belief that gay and lesbian Service members should not be deployed to countries where gay sex is illegal; repeal might require changes to Service Agreements with allies (e.g., related to local laws, who prosecutes cases); and the fact that HIV+ persons (HIV positivity being assumed to still be unique to gays) are not deployable to OCONUS settings.

VII Morale/Socializing

- A. As noted in the unit cohesion section, participants made a distinction between the formal sphere of work and the informal sphere of socializing, and most thought repeal would be more likely to affect the latter. Several expressed the view that gay men would be subject to ridicule, hazing, and possibly physical violence. On a more subtle level, they indicated that having a gay unit member could put a damper on informal socializing—for example, they said they would feel inhibited from making gay jokes (concern that this would create discrimination lawsuits) or engaging in “roughhousing” kinds of activities that might be misconstrued as homosexual. Some drew parallels with ways they had had to “tone things down” in preparation for a female unit member.
- B. Again, not everyone subscribed to this viewpoint. Some participants indicated that difficulties in social acceptance of gays and lesbians were tied to past experiences, the individual’s level of tolerance for diversity, and regional differences in the kinds of environments in which Service members had been raised (e.g., soldiers from East Coast cities or the more liberal West Coast would be more likely to be tolerant of differences than those from small towns in the South or the Midwest).
- C. From the perspective of how gays and lesbians themselves would be likely to behave if DADT were to be repealed, some participants thought it unlikely that those already serving would drastically alter their behavior, although new recruits coming in after repeal might be more inclined to present themselves differently.
- D. Others were concerned about gays and lesbians behaving flamboyantly or engaging in overt public displays of affection (gays kissing or holding hands in public gatherings). In addition to some saying they would be made “uncomfortable” by such displays, there were concerns expressed about how they would explain such behavior to their children, particularly if gay and lesbian couples were allowed to reside in base housing. Some expressed concern that gays and lesbians might try to “push their lifestyle” on others.

VIII Recruitment and Retention

- A. Views varied both in terms of short term and long term impact on recruitment. Some said repeal might initially have a negative impact on recruitment, but would likely even out in the long run. Others thought overall repeal would increase recruitment by broadening the pool to include otherwise qualified gays and lesbians who might have been deterred from joining because of DADT. In addition, the point was raised that recruitment might increase among heterosexual soldiers because certain schools (e.g., Harvard Law) currently bar recruiters because DADT is viewed as in violation of the school's anti-discrimination policies. Some thought there might be changes in recruitment rates by region of the country—that is, recruitment rates would go up in areas with greater numbers and wider acceptance of gays and lesbians, and go down in more conservative areas.
- B. Very few participants said outright that repeal would keep them from re-upping. When it came to their views on what others would do, they thought some might threaten to leave the service, but most would probably not follow through on the threat. Others, however, said if the law were repealed they would leave before their commitments were completed. They raised the possibility of a “conscientious objector” model being put into place for soldiers who had moral objections to gays serving in the military.
- C. In terms of what they would recommend to others about joining if repeal were to go into effect, some said they would be more likely to recommend joining because the military would be truly diverse; others said they would be less likely recommend service because of the perceived “moral” implications of a repeal; and yet others said it would make no difference to their recommendations at all. Still others noted that their decision of whether or not to recommend joining the military would depend on the characteristics of the individual in question (e.g., the individual's religious convictions or perceived tolerance for differences).

IX Critical Role of Leadership

Perhaps the single most consistent overarching finding across all the groups is that effective leadership at all levels will be the key to setting the tone and creating the conditions under which repeal could occur. It will be critical to have clear direction on policy and how to implement it at all levels—everyone is looking to their respective leaders for guidance and clarity on this issue. Extensive training was the most common suggestion of how to deal with the challenges of implementation.

This was discussed in terms of “expectation management”, needing clear guidance from superiors so “it (what to do to implement the policy) is not open to interpretation,” worries that implementation will be rushed and leaders “may not have the tools to deal with it.” **There**

should be clarity, and a command climate that does not tolerate a double standard in either direction.

X Emergent Cross-Cutting Themes: *The following are emergent or nascent themes that seem to cut across different subject areas; it is still premature to declare them full-fledged themes until we look more closely at data from subsequent visits.*

- A. Comparisons Drawn to Racial Integration and Integration of Women into the Military: Participants drew illustrative examples from past efforts to racially integrate the military and/or to implement gender integration. In many cases, the underlying point was that: even though there was initial resistance and “a period of adjustment”—and some people are probably still not happy about it—it was done before, so it can be done again, with the proper guidance. Others did not think this was an apt analogy because they see someone’s sexual orientation as a matter of choice, unlike gender or race. By extension, some felt that the perceived “immorality” of gays and lesbians raised unique issues that were not true with respect to gender or race.
- B. Relationship to Wider Society: In a related theme, some participants voiced resentment at being asked to serve as “guinea pigs” for social experimentation. Why should Service members be forced to grapple with difficult issues that have yet to be resolved in civilian society? The counterpoint view was expressed pride in the military’s ability to be at the cutting edge of social change and to lead the way for civilian society.
- C. Tacit Knowledge: A number of participants said they are already operating in situations where fellow Service members are recognized as gay or lesbian and that successful adaptations have been made to this situation without overtly addressing the issue. Interestingly, however, participants appeared to draw different implications from this. For some, the recognition of having operated with this tacit knowledge suggested that all the anticipated “dramatic” consequences of repeal might be greatly exaggerated. For others, the message was: if it’s not broken, why try to fix it?
- D. Benefits for Gay Partners: Participants expressed wide-ranging views on the potential impacts of a repeal of DADT. Despite these marked differences, there was widespread agreement that if gays and lesbians were allowed to serve in the military, it would “create unfairness” for them to be denied military benefits because of DOMA. The consensus was that if the law were to change, then it should be changed “all the way” so that all soldiers and their families would be treated equally.