

VIA U.S. MAIL AND FACSIMILE

March 18, 2010

United States House of Representatives Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

United States Senate Armed Services Committee
Room SR-228, Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

To the Honorable Ike Skelton, Chairman, and the Honorable Howard P. McKeon, Ranking Member, and the Honorable Carl Levin, Chairman, and the Honorable John McCain, Ranking Member:

We write in response to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates' and Chairman Michael G. Mullen's recent testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Congress's Policy Concerning Homosexuals in the Armed Forces (10 U.S.C. § 654). During the Committee's hearing on February 2, 2010, the Secretary and Chairman announced efforts to adjust within the confines of existing law the Pentagon's existing operations surrounding the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in preparation for its repeal.

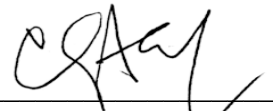
Our letter today expresses our support for the Pentagon and for President Barack Obama, who also called for repeal in his State of the Union address. We join them in recommending that Congress should repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

As educators, we understand the importance of fostering strong leaders. To train those who can lead our multifaceted, multicultural society, we work to recruit and retain students who bring diversity of many kinds to the campus, including, but not limited to, diversity on the basis of race, national origin, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. One of our core missions is training America's public servants and providing them with opportunities to serve in all levels of government. Don't Ask, Don't Tell directly obstructs our efforts, preventing some of our best and brightest from serving their country in the Armed Forces.

In our capacity as educators, we seek to instill values of tolerance and respect. These values suffer when any member of our community experiences discrimination. The effects of Don't Ask, Don't Tell are marginalization, exclusion, and denigration, problems exacerbated by the existing Solomon Amendment. Discharging gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members merely because of their sexual orientation is never justified. Neither is denying our students access to careers, training, and scholarships based on their sexual orientation. We have the highest regard for our students who have served and those who seek to serve in the Armed Forces, and we aim to make sure that opportunity for service is available for all of those willing to make that admirable commitment.

America faces myriad challenges abroad, which demand the service of America's best and brightest. Don't Ask, Don't Tell's effects are most deleterious at this moment, when young, talented Americans are denied the opportunity to defend America. The imperative of recruiting and retaining the best is greatest when our Armed Forces are deployed. Military readiness is enhanced, not compromised, by ending discrimination that prevents the military from drawing on the broadest pool of talent. Our allies, including Israel, Canada, and Britain, have repealed similar bans, and their armed forces continue to succeed.

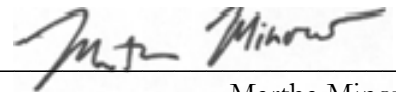
The President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressly support repealing the policy. We applaud their positions, and urge you to lend your full support to the Pentagon and Commander-in-Chief on this matter.



Christopher Edley, Jr.
Honorable William H. Orrick, Jr. Distinguished Chair and Dean
University of California, Berkeley, School of Law



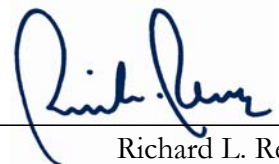
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CC:

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