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Grassroots Activists Gather to Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

*U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy, HRC, alongside
lesbian, gay, and straight service
members, demand repeal*

www.hrc.org/RepealDADT



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- ▶ [VIDEO: HRC's DADT Repeal Press Conference at Capitol Hill Lobby Day](#)

3/4/2010

Washington – The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-PA), alongside lesbian, gay and straight veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, held a press conference today in coordination with a swell of average Americans fighting for repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). The event is timed with HRC's annual spring Lobby Day where more than 300 members and supporters are expected to participate.

"One of the worst things that you can hear when you are lobbying is that 'no one in my district is gay and no one in my district wants me to vote for this.' We know that's not true of any district but we have to prove it," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese, while speaking to more than 300 average American's demanding repeal today on the Hill. "We come with the most powerful message of all: I am your constituent, and your constituents, like the rest of America, have had enough of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'"

This week, U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) introduced the Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2010 in the U.S. Senate. The bill would repeal the military's DADT law, which prohibits lesbians and gays from serving openly in the U.S. Armed Forces. Rep. Patrick Murphy, an Iraq War veteran and a former paratrooper in the U.S. Army's elite 82nd Airborne Division, is the lead sponsor of similar legislation in the U.S House of Representatives.

Military leaders, including Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen recognize

General John M. Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have all indicated their support for repealing DADT as well.

The vast majority of Americans – including majorities of Republicans, Independents and Democrats – support repealing DADT. Americans recognize that on the battlefield, it does not matter whether a soldier is lesbian, gay or straight; what matters is that a soldier gets the job done. This discriminatory law hurts military readiness and national security while putting American soldiers fighting overseas at risk.

HRC recently launched a national action alert and announced details of its ongoing campaign to repeal DADT. To focus on key states where congressional support for repeal is critical, HRC has dispatched field staff to six states – Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Virginia and West Virginia, with other states to follow in the months ahead. HRC is also asking members and supporters to sign up and to join the growing network of supporters to repeal DADT. To learn more visit: www.hrc.org/RepealDADT.

Prior to this, HRC has spent years laying the groundwork for repeal of DADT through programs like the “Voices of Honor” and “Legacy of Service” tours, which organized in key states to highlight the costs of DADT and promote the voices of gay and straight veterans who support repeal. These efforts began in 2005 when HRC and Servicemembers United launched the first of three national tours to share the stories of service members who have been harmed by DADT. From Philadelphia to Phoenix, from Kansas City to San Diego, the tours made stops nationwide, driving local and national media attention, including coverage by the military itself.

Furthermore, in 2007, to commemorate the 14th anniversary of DADT, HRC displayed 12,000 flags on the National Mall to recognize the 12,000 women and men discharged from the military since the enactment of DADT.

The Human Rights Campaign is America’s largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all.