

Running Head: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S DON'T ASK DON'T TELL POLICY

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Since the change in the Department of Defense (DOD) Policy in 1993 on homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces the Army has faced numerous ethical challenges. With the conception of the Army Values in 1998 the Army has struggled to instill all of the seven values. DOD's don't ask don't tell policy contradicts the Army Values by condoning deceit and directly affects the morale of a unit by undermining the value of integrity. The Army is a cross section of society and in being such, it faces similar challenges. Policies concerning homosexuals have impacted numerous organizations throughout the world. Even the Boy Scouts of America has face comparable challenges with its policy concerning homosexuals. Recently, numerous retired generals and admirals have released a letter to Congress pleading with them to change the law.

Background

As early as the American revolutionary war there have been cases involving homosexual sodomy. Sodomy was considered a violation of the Articles of War yet in 1942 the military considered homosexual standing as justification for separation. This attitude towards identifying gays led to controversy during the Vietnam War. It was acknowledged that men would act as if they were homosexual as a way of avoiding the draft. All the way until 1981 the guiding principal for all branches of the military was to maintain, with their judgment, any person alleged of homosexual conduct. This gave birth to the queen for a day rule. The stipulation was that if charged with homosexual conduct and able to prove that it was a single event that you would be permitted to stay in the military. This was most notable during the Vietnam era. It wasn't until 1981 that DOD changed its stance on homosexuality.

Then President Bill Clinton came into power. During his campaign for President, he pledged to permit all citizens not considering their sexual orientation to serve overtly in the armed forces. Unable to accomplish this promise he had Colin Powell put together the new policy in 1993, don't ask don't tell. This would prove to be a turning point in American policy as well as the Army's ability to effectively lead Soldiers. The repercussions felt throughout the Army extended all the way to my foxhole in 1995 during the Implementation Force operation in Bosnia.

Societies Similar Struggles

Not only has the military been struggling with policies concerning sexual orientation but the Boy Scouts of America has faced challenges concerning homosexuals as well. How could a parent feel secure with their children's safety if they new a scout leader was homosexual? Who would want to leave their child with a scout leader that was openly gay? These questions and an enormous amount more plagued society's premier institute for training and developing young boys and men.

This institute has become increasingly vivid in its right to determine who and who is not eligible to join Scouting. Even as I type this there is a court battle going on in Philadelphia. The Boy Scouts of America face eviction from their building for maintaining a ban on gays and may even have to pay 200,000 dollars a year in penalties. This is happening even though the Supreme Court said that the Boy Scouts of America can ban gay people. A set of double standards exists in society as well as the armed forces.

From My Foxhole

How can the Army expect its warriors to live up to the Army Values, especially the integrity value? I personally have no issues with gay citizens serving this great country as long as they don't let it interfere with their duties. I do have sincere concerns with the Army asking its warriors to live a facade. By condoning deceit the Army is going against its core values. Someone has to stand tall in battle and provide clear concise orders. Either it's acceptable to serve your country as a gay citizen or its not. Do not mislead or circumvent the truth to save face with an extremist. Do not let this great institution with so many values and traditions be held hostage to the extremist. Do not preach integrity in one breath and ask your Soldiers to lie in another. Someone has got to take the high ground. Will I see you there?

Ironically a letter is scheduled to be released on 7 December, 2007. Retired generals and admirals, to include John Shalikashvili are urging Congress to repeal the law. The following is from a recent International Herald Tribune article:

I concur with their sentiments. We are at war with the vary people that challenge our freedom. The next greatest generation has an enormous task at hand. We ask our Soldiers to lay down their life for their country. We should not ask them to throw their integrity out the window as they sacrifice themselves for America's cause. Flank the enemy, keep shooting, keep your head down, and I'll see you all on the high ground.

References

