

Los Angeles City Council Calls For Repeal Of DADT  
by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff  
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(Los Angeles, California) Los Angeles has become the ninth major city to call for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" the ban on gays serving openly in the military.

In a unanimous vote this week city council approved a resolution calling on Congress to pass the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, the legislation that would end the ban signed into law during the Clinton administration.

The Military Readiness Enhancement Act currently has 136 cosponsors from both parties.

Since the ban became law in 1993 more than 12,000 servicemembers have been dismissed under DADT.

According to statistics from the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network which advocates for gays in the military an average of two service members are dismissed under the law every day.

A report prepared by the Government Accountability Office shows that nearly 800 people with skills deemed 'mission-critical' by the Pentagon have been dismissed under the law, including more than 322 language experts, at least 58 of whom specialized in Arabic.

The GAO said that DADT has cost American taxpayers more than \$364 million since it was implemented.

The number of gays and lesbians who have attempted to enlist and rejected because they said they were gay is not known.

A study conducted last year for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network concluded that the U.S. military could attract as many as 41,000 new recruits if gays and lesbians in the military were able to be open about their sexual orientation.

A Zogby poll taken in 2006 showed three-out-of-four members of the military who are serving in Iraq or recently returned home don't care if someone in their unit is gay.

"Communities across America are demanding that Congress place military readiness ahead of discrimination," said Former Marine Captain Tom Carpenter a SLDN board member.

"This vote, on the eve of the Veterans Day weekend, is a reminder to us all that we must treat all service members with honor and that by keeping the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law in place, we deny our lesbian, gay and bisexual personnel the dignity and respect they have earned," said Carpenter.

In addition to Los Angeles city councils in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, St. Louis, Tucson, West Hollywood, CA, and Cathedral City, CA, in calling for repeal of DADT. The California State Legislature also recently approved a resolution calling for an end to the ban.

Three court challenges to the ban are under way.

Earlier this week Maj. Margaret Witt, who was dismissed from the military because of the policy asked a federal appeals court to reinstate he lawsuit against the military.  
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A suit by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is underway in federal court in Boston and a third, by Log Cabin Republicans, is before a federal court in California.  
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