

NEWS RELEASE

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

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APA Urges Elimination of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Policy in the Military

ARLINGTON, Va. (Feb. 02, 2010) – The American Psychiatric Association is calling for the U.S. military to abandon the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, which allows sexual orientation to be used as a reason to dismiss individuals from the armed services.

“The U.S. should repeal ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ and allow capable men and women to serve without regard to sexual orientation,” said APA President Alan F. Schatzberg, M.D.

The “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was adopted in the Clinton administration as a compromise to a complete ban on gays and lesbians in the military. The Service Members Legal Defense Network says 14,000 military service members have been forced out of service under the policy. The APA Board of Trustees has voted to urge abandonment of the policy.

Since 1973, the APA has formally opposed all public and private discrimination against homosexuals in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, and licensing.

APA policy has long opposed dismissal from the armed services based on sexual orientation, and it has called for international health organizations, psychiatric organizations, and individual psychiatrists to urge the repeal in their own countries of laws that penalizes homosexual acts by consenting adults in private.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

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