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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

May 26, 2010

RICHARD D. DeBOBES, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOSEPH W. BOWAB, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

Senator Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Chairman Levin,

As we continue with the Committee markup of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 and consider proposals to repeal section 654 of title 10, United States Code, relating to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law, I ask you to consider the attached letters from each of the Service Chiefs requesting that we not go forward prematurely with legislation. I requested their views in writing yesterday.

Since February, we have consistently heard from each of the Service Chiefs, that we should let the review of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" be completed before we legislate. And today, we hear it again in letters Service Chiefs'.

A repeal clearly reflects delivery of a political promise that is being kept. At a time when we are fighting two wars and the force is stressed by ongoing combat operations, we should acknowledge this reality, pause, and think about how a repeal will affect the military and their families.

The Chiefs' reasons for objecting are clear, acting now will cause confusion, disrupt the review process, and will signal that military members and their families' opinions don't matter. Also, it will not respect the role of the Chiefs, which is to give their "best military advice."

I cannot over emphasize the importance of completing the comprehensive review prior to taking any legislative action. Our military is currently engaged in two wars and we must have a true assessment of the impact of repealing 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' on battle effectiveness prior to taking any legislative action. We must remain focused on what is in the best interest of our service men and women, and not simply fulfilling a campaign promise.

Sincerely,



John McCain
Ranking Member

Attachments:

Service Chief's response to Sen. McCain letter