



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE COAST GUARD
Washington, DC 20593-0001
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To the Men and Women of the United States Coast Guard:

When President Obama delivered his State of the Union Address in January, he called for a repeal of the statute (10 U.S.C. 654), commonly referred to as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," concerning homosexuality in the Armed Forces. The Secretary of Defense established a Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG) to study how a repeal could be implemented. All of the Services, including the Coast Guard, have full time representation on the CRWG. Each Service Chief will review the CRWG's recommendations before a final submission is sent to the Secretary of Defense in December 2010. As an Armed Force, the Coast Guard will comply with the law and follow Department of Defense policy changes on this issue.

While the CRWG conducts its work, the Secretary of Defense convened a separate study group to examine and recommend interim policy revisions that reflect the President's intent within the confines of existing law. The Secretary of Defense approved their recommendations and a summary is provided below.

- The revisions make a number of process changes affecting separation proceedings.
- The revisions also raise the decision level at which investigations and separations may be made. Investigations or separation proceedings can only be initiated by a Flag Officer in the service member's chain of command.
- Only officers, O-5 and above, can conduct fact finding investigations and the separation authority must be a Flag Officer.
- The revisions do not change the grounds for separation.

These interim policy changes take effect immediately, although the Services have 30 days to promulgate guidance. An ALCOAST providing greater detail for unit commanders is forthcoming. In the meantime, commanders should consult with the Personnel Service Center and their servicing Staff Judge Advocate.

During the CRWG review process, we will thoroughly examine the implications of these policies and minimize disruptions to our people who are operating at an extremely high operational tempo. We understand this is a sensitive issue. As Guardians, we need to respect the differing opinions of our shipmates as we discuss these interim changes and the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

As always, we are grateful for the tremendous work that you provide for the Coast Guard and the Nation.

Sincerely,

THAD W. ALLEN
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard

CHARLES W. BOWEN
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard