
Readiness and DADT Repeal: Has the New Policy of Open Service Undermined the Military?

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Abstract

Prior to the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell” (DADT) on September 20, 2011, many observers predicted that allowing lesbian, gay and bisexual troops to serve openly would harm the military, and a group of more than 1,000 retired general and flag officers predicted that repeal could “break the All-Volunteer Force.” This study is the first scholarly effort to assess the accuracy of such predictions about the impact of DADT repeal on military readiness. We conducted our research during the half-year period starting six months after repeal and concluding at the one year mark, and we pursued ten separate research strategies including in-depth interviews, survey analysis, on-site field observations, pretest/posttest quasi experimentation, secondary source analysis, and a comprehensive review of media articles. Our goal was to maximize the likelihood

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of identifying evidence of damage caused by repeal, and we made vigorous efforts to collect data from repeal opponents including anti-repeal generals and admirals, activists, academic experts, service members and watchdog organizations. Our conclusion, based on all of the evidence available to us, is that DADT repeal has had no overall negative impact on military readiness or its component dimensions, including cohesion, recruitment, retention, assaults, harassment, or morale. If anything, DADT repeal appears to have enhanced the military's ability to pursue its mission.

Keywords

gays in the military, "don't ask, don't tell", DADT

In 2010, with the support of the top military leadership, Congress voted to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" (DADT), and the new policy of open service took effect on September 20, 2011.¹ Since then, lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) Americans have been allowed to serve openly. While some observers doubted that allowing LGB troops to serve openly would undermine combat effectiveness, others believed that DADT repeal would harm the military.² In March 2009, 1,167 retired generals and admirals released a statement claiming that DADT repeal "would undermine recruiting and retention, impact leadership at all levels, have adverse effects on the willingness of parents who lend their sons and daughters to military service, and eventually break the All-Volunteer Force."³ Such forecasts, if true, would prove devastating to the armed forces, but they have not yet been subject to social scientific analysis. This study is the first scholarly effort to assess the accuracy of predictions about the impact of DADT repeal on military readiness.

To determine whether DADT repeal had an impact on readiness, we conducted research during the half-year period starting six months after repeal and concluding at the one-year mark. We sought to maximize the likelihood of identifying evidence of damage caused by repeal by pursuing multiple methodologies including in-depth interviews of experts, activists, and practitioners ($N = 30$) and of service members ($N = 62$), survey research ($N = 14$), on-site field observation of four military units, content analysis of media stories ($N = 462$), pretest/posttest quasi-experimentation and longitudinal analysis of secondary data.⁴ We made a particularly vigorous effort to solicit the views of opponents of DADT repeal by seeking input from 553 anti-repeal retired generals and admirals and 22 well-known activist and expert opponents of repeal, as well as senior staff members from 9 anti-repeal and veterans service organizations.⁵

Our conclusion, based on all of the evidence available to us, is that DADT repeal has had no overall negative impact on military readiness or its component dimensions, including cohesion, recruitment, retention, assaults, harassment, or morale. If anything, DADT repeal appears to have enhanced the military's ability to pursue its mission.

Military Readiness

While the nearly two-decade public dialogue over DADT included debates over a wide variety of issues, military readiness—broadly conceived—was the central, underlying concern of almost every aspect of the discussion. Despite such concerns, the evidence suggests that DADT repeal has not undermined readiness. Indeed, none of the individual opponents or watchdog organizations we contacted identified any evidence suggesting that DADT repeal has undermined readiness. None of the heterosexual service members who opposed or who continue to oppose repeal and whom we interviewed or surveyed reported any evidence indicating that the new policy has compromised readiness.⁶

Among the retired generals and admirals who predicted that repeal would “break the All-Volunteer Force,” one told us that “I believe evidence is growing that substantiates my initial concerns,” but he declined to elaborate or provide details. None of the others reported any evidence suggesting that the new policy has compromised readiness. One retired lieutenant general told us that he “had not heard anything or received anything from anyone about having any problems.” A retired one-star general said that a friend’s son who is a company commander in Afghanistan told him “I don’t pay any attention to it. It’s not really an issue.”⁷

None of the heterosexual service members we interviewed or surveyed offered any evidence suggesting that repeal has undermined military readiness. An Army Ranger told us that repeal “didn’t change anything . . . We’ve got a guy in the unit who is gay. We’ve been working together for years and everyone knew, but no one ever cared. For us it’s all about whether or not you’re good at your job. . . it’s all about quiet professionalism, not about your sexual orientation.” An Air Force pilot said he could scarcely assess the impact of repeal because “I know that it has been repealed, but it just hasn’t affected me in any way, shape or form . . . I guess I would have to say it is a success. I say that because I honestly haven’t noticed any difference at all from before the repeal to now.”⁸

Some of the heterosexual service members who oppose repeal acknowledged to us that the new policy has not undermined readiness. A Navy SEAL who opposes repeal was nonetheless adamant that the military is a professional force and that even those who do not agree with particular policies will follow them because that is what they are trained to do: “We’re professional; we do what we’ve done in the past, make the work environment professional.”⁹

None of the scholars we interviewed knew of any evidence suggesting that DADT repeal has harmed military readiness. For example, Dr. Jay Goodwin, a principal author of the Pentagon’s 2010 report on DADT repeal, told us that, “in terms of negative impact, I have not heard of any.” As President of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, John Allen Williams communicates regularly with numerous scholars and experts who study civil–military relations. Asked about the implementation of DADT repeal, he said that it “appeared to be very smooth and very well-done” and that he was not aware of any negative consequences.¹⁰

Political and military leaders have concluded that DADT repeal has not compromised readiness. In February 2012, President Obama referred to repeal as a nonevent and said that while some warned that ending the policy would be a “huge, ugly issue,” the result was that “nothing’s happened.” Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said in May 2012, based on an unreleased Pentagon report that assessed the first months of the new policy, that repeal is “going very well . . . It’s not impacting on readiness.” Secretary Panetta added that “Very frankly, the military has moved beyond.” General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters in May 2012 that “I have not found any negative effect on good order and discipline.” He asked, “What were we afraid of?” and answered that “We didn’t know” how repeal would go, but ultimately “it worked out well.” Three months after the new policy of open service went into effect, the service chief who was most outspoken against repeal, Marine Corps Commandant James Amos, said he was “very pleased with how it has gone.” According to the *Washington Times*, Amos said “he heard little from Marines about serving with openly gay troops.” In March 2012, Pentagon spokeswoman Eileen Lainez confirmed that the new policy is “proceeding smoothly across the Department of Defense.”¹¹

We designed a pretest/posttest quasi-experiment of nonequivalent groups as an independent means for assessing whether repeal has undermined readiness. In the case at hand, a group of service members ($N = 80$) ranked their unit’s readiness on a scale of one to ten two months before DADT repeal, and then another group of service members ($N = 120$) ranked their unit’s readiness six months after repeal. By comparing the pre- and post-repeal average reported levels of readiness, we were able to assess whether the new policy of open service was associated with any change. To avoid priming the subjects’ attitudes about repeal, our survey did not mention DADT or sexual orientation. The troops did not report any significant change in readiness after DADT repeal: the average level of unit readiness for the pre-repeal group was 8.10 while the average post-repeal ranking was 8.11.¹²

In response to a January 2012 *Military Times* survey, 4.5 percent of 733 active-duty troops and 59 reservists polled said that, after DADT repeal, their unit was negatively impacted when someone disclosed being gay or bisexual or when an openly gay or bisexual person joined their unit.¹³ That said, a comparison of 2011 pre-repeal and 2012 post-repeal *Military Times* survey data shows that service members reported approximately the same level of military readiness after DADT repeal as before it. On all four components of readiness measured by *Military Times* surveys (quality of training, officers and enlisted leaders, and whether today’s service members are the best ever), the 2012 post-repeal data indicate approximately the same levels as the 2011 pre-repeal data.¹⁴ If repeal had compromised overall readiness in any discernible way, it would be hard to understand why every dimension of readiness assessed by *Military Times* survey respondents remained stable after the new policy of open service went into effect, and we believe that claims of unit harm may reflect disapproval of repeal, not actual evidence of a decline in readiness.

Contrary to expectations of a post-repeal decline in readiness, we uncovered considerable evidence in our open-ended interviews about ways in which the new policy has enhanced the military's ability to pursue its mission. More specifically, both experts and service members told us that repeal had enhanced military readiness in the areas of discipline, command, family readiness, and spirituality. To take one of many examples, a Navy pilot told us about two gay service members who broke a shipboard rule before DADT repeal. Commanders were not comfortable bringing charges for that low-level transgression because doing so would have required outing the service members as gay. The infraction of which they were guilty was minor and had a very slight penalty associated with it, but the penalty for their being labeled as gay was separation from the military. Because the commanders did not believe that the lower infraction was significant enough to warrant discharge, they declined to charge the pair with the lesser infraction. "This put the leadership in an awkward position," explained the pilot, "and the repeal just takes away that extra hurdle and allows commanders to lead better."¹⁵

Components of Military Readiness

Unit Cohesion

Unit cohesion refers to bonds of trust among members of a military unit.¹⁶ With two exceptions of service members who expressed concerns about the possibility of a future decline in cohesion, none of the heterosexual troops we interviewed and surveyed offered any evidence suggesting that DADT repeal undermined cohesion. None of the LGB service members we interviewed or surveyed reported any decline in unit cohesion following the repeal of DADT. Nor did any of the scholarly experts we interviewed know of any evidence suggesting that repeal has undermined cohesion. Martin Cook, who has served as a professor at the Naval War College, Air Force Academy, and Army War College, summarized the apparent position of many of these scholars in noting that arguments stressing possible damage to unit cohesion "were really a smokescreen for other reasons; those were just the only publicly acceptable reasons they could put forward."¹⁷ One of us observed daily operations of multiple military units and found no major differences between units that included openly LGB troops and those that did not. Finally, top political and military leaders have confirmed that DADT repeal did not prompt any decline in cohesion. Aside from the one retired general who, as noted in a previous section, said that "I believe evidence is growing that substantiates my initial concerns," none of the opponents of DADT repeal, including activists, watchdog organizations or retired generals and admirals, identified any evidence contradicting senior leadership's contention that repeal has not undermined unit cohesion.¹⁸

Although the preponderance of evidence suggests that repeal has not undermined cohesion, we did identify data indicating that the new policy of open service has

promoted greater honesty which, in turn, has enabled the troops to develop tighter bonds of trust. Published and ongoing longitudinal research at West Point confirms that both military academy and ROTC cadets are increasingly tolerant of gays and lesbians in the military, even more so following repeal.¹⁹ And LGB troops who participated in our quasi-experiment reported a slight increase in cohesion after DADT repeal: the average level of unit cohesion for the pre-repeal group was 7.18 while the average post-repeal ranking was 7.65, an increase of 6.5 percent.²⁰ Finally, our interview data suggest that repeal has promoted greater trust. A heterosexual Marine sergeant told us that “it’s been a lot better since we now know with whom we serve. It’s all out in the open and now there is no wondering or guessing. We know. And knowledge is power!” He went on to say that, “We now get along better and we accept our unit members as they are; we do not beat around the bush or sugarcoat anything. It’s a lot better now. [We’re all] very equal.”²¹

Recruitment and Retention

The preponderance of evidence suggests that repeal has not had any discernible impact, either positive or negative, on recruitment or retention. Although 8.4 percent of service members reported on *Military Times* surveys that DADT repeal has reduced their likelihood of reenlisting, a comparison of 2011 pre-repeal and 2012 post-repeal *Military Times* surveys shows that after repeal, service members were just as likely to say that they would remain in the military as they were before repeal. In response to a question asking, “If you had to decide today, would you reenlist or—if an officer—extend your commitment,” 70 percent of 2011 respondents answered yes (17 percent no, 14 percent undecided), but 72 percent of 2012 respondents indicated that they would reenlist (15 percent no, 14 percent undecided). In response to the question, “Do you currently plan to remain in the military for at least 20 years and earn a full retirement package,” 84 percent of 2011 respondents answered yes (5 percent no, 11 percent undecided), but 85 percent of 2012 respondents indicated that they would reenlist (3 percent no, 12 percent undecided). Even though 8.4 percent of 2012 post-repeal *Military Times* survey respondents said that DADT repeal made them less likely to remain in the military, repeal appears to be a minor if not trivial factor in their decision making. If repeal were a significant factor in reenlistment decisions for 8.4 percent of the force, then it would be hard to understand why, post-repeal, troops were just as likely to say that they would reenlist as was the case before repeal.

That said, the correlation between reenlistment intentions and actual reenlistment is generally low unless intention data are collected shortly before the expiration of terms of service, so it is important to consider actual rates. The military has successfully met its recruitment and retention targets in the wake of DADT repeal. According to recruitment and retention numbers released by the Department of Defense on June 29, 2012, more than nine months after DADT repeal went into effect, “All four active services met or exceeded their numerical accession goals for fiscal 2012,

through May.” The Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force achieved 100 percent of their goals, while the Army exceeded its goal with an additional 253 recruits, thus reaching 101 percent of its target. In addition, “The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force all exhibited strong retention through the eighth month of fiscal 2012.” On the reserve side, “five of the six reserve components met or exceeded their numerical accession goals for fiscal 2012, through May.”²²

Assaults and Harassment

Despite warnings about an increase in assaults, we did not uncover any evidence suggesting that DADT repeal has led to rise in violence among service members. A Pentagon spokesperson noted in April 2012 that “Military officials say they’re unaware of any discipline issues relating to gays serving openly.”²³ Lieutenant Josh Seefried, Codirector of OutServe, a network of 5,700 active-duty LGBT service members, told us that he has heard of one case in which a gay service member may have been physically attacked since repeal, but that it remains unclear whether the victim was gay and whether the attacker believed that the victim was gay.²⁴ Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), a well-regarded watchdog organization with nearly two decades of experience monitoring the status of LGBT troops, reported in March 2012 that since repeal, its staff has received only “a few minor complaints.” SLDN staff confirmed in subsequent correspondence that the complaints were about implementation issues, not assaults.²⁵

In May 2012, the Center for Military Readiness (CMR) released a statement suggesting that DADT repeal has caused an increase in male–male rape among service members. The statement, titled “Early Consequences of Military LGBT Law,” reported an increase in male–male sexual assaults between fiscal year 2006 and fiscal year 2011. Yet, the Army collected most of the data for its 2012 study prior to repeal, which occurred on September 20, 2011, just nine days before the end of fiscal year 2011.²⁶ No other watchdog organization or individual opponent of DADT repeal has reported any case of violence attributable to the new policy of open service.

Despite the lack of violence associated with DADT repeal, we did find many instances in which service members expressed anti-LGB sentiment. In response to an open-ended question asking LGBT troops whether they had experienced discrimination after DADT repeal and, if so, to describe it, 11 percent of respondents mentioned disturbing incidents.²⁷ While harassment, discrimination, and bias remain problems in the wake of DADT repeal, with the exception of isolated occurrences, we found no evidence suggesting that service-wide patterns of harassment are a consequence of repeal. Sexual orientation–based harassment long predated DADT repeal, so its mere existence cannot be attributed to the new policy of open service.²⁸ In addition, the majority of LGB service members (72.4 percent) report that they have been well treated since DADT repeal.²⁹

Finally, we learned of many incidents in which DADT repeal was associated with a leveling off or even a decline in harassment. For example, an enlisted soldier stationed at a military university told us that when DADT was in effect, his unit mates often used degrading, anti-gay language, almost absent-mindedly and with little consequence. After repeal, he said, “it was kind of a big deal for two weeks,” with people wondering what it would mean for people to be openly gay. But after the transition occurred and the initial questions died down, and the new attitude seemed to be, “now that I know someone who is [gay], I’m talking about a real person. I’m not just using abstract insults [but words] that actually mean something.”³⁰

Morale

Morale is a catch-all term that can refer to esprit de corps, satisfaction, well-being, and interpersonal adjustment, and that can be used to characterize an individual, a unit, or an entire organization. Despite concerns about a post-repeal decline in morale, the preponderance of evidence indicates that DADT repeal produced no overall change in service-wide morale. All three measures of morale recorded on *Military Times* surveys indicate that, service-wide, morale remained constant from 2011 to 2012. Respondents to the January 2012 post-repeal survey reported approximately the same quality of life, job satisfaction, and willingness to recommend a military career to someone else as respondents to the July/August 2011 pre-repeal survey.³¹ And, as discussed earlier in this study, post-repeal respondents were as likely to say that they planned to remain in the military for twenty years and that they would reenlist if offered the opportunity to do so today as were pre-repeal respondents.

Although repeal did not produce any net change in service-wide morale, the new policy did lead to a decrease in personal morale for some service members and an increase for others, and the benefits of the policy shift were quite consequential for some troops, both gay and straight.³² An Army signals analyst told us that “after the repeal, it was as if a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. It was an invigorating feeling knowing that there was nothing left to hide.”³³ A gay enlisted soldier told us that “As far as morale goes, now nobody has to worry about getting kicked out for it, so my morale has gone way up in that aspect.”³⁴ James Parco, who served in the Air Force for twenty years and taught leadership strategy at the US Air Force Academy and Air Command and Staff College, told us that “the fact that we’ve actually instilled this new sense of integrity into the service by the repeal of the law has been the biggest impact, but it’s completely unobservable unless you actually talk to these individuals who were oppressed one on one. If you ask them, they’ll unequivocally tell you that ‘absolutely it has fundamentally changed my life, my view of the military, my existence; I just feel like a revived person, something is very, very different.’”³⁵

Although the 5.8 percent of LGB and heterosexual troops who told *Military Times* that repeal had a positive effect on their morale is less than the 13.7 percent

of heterosexuals who reported a decline, for some of those whose morale improved, a “huge weight was lifted off” their shoulders.³⁶ And service-wide, time-series data discussed above indicate that morale did not decline as the new policy of open service took effect. Our conclusion is that repeal led to an increase in morale for some service members and a decrease for others and that because the positive and negative consequences of the policy shift roughly balanced one another, no net service-wide change in morale resulted from repeal.

Conclusion

Our findings about DADT repeal are consistent with the extensive literature on foreign militaries that have allowed LGB troops to serve openly. According to that literature, none of the foreign militaries that have enacted policies of open service have suffered a decline in overall readiness or any of its component dimensions including cohesion, recruitment, retention, assaults, harassment, or morale. Studies have been conducted by a wide range of scholars and organizations including the Pentagon’s Comprehensive Review Working Group and the Rand Corporation. Since the Dutch military became the first to allow open service in 1974, no scholar has documented any decline in readiness or its component dimensions that could be attributable to the lifting of a ban on LGB troops by any foreign military.³⁷

In the US case, the success of DADT repeal most likely should be attributed to the Pentagon’s Comprehensive Review Working Group’s carefully written support plan for implementation and the seriousness and thoroughness of the subsequent training processes in all service branches.³⁸ In addition, four other factors likely contributed to DADT repeal being a nonevent in the United States. First, there was no wave of mass disclosures after repeal, and only 19.4 percent of 751 heterosexual service members surveyed by *Military Times* indicated that after repeal, someone in their unit disclosed being LGB or that an LGB service member joined their unit.³⁹ Second, LGB as well as heterosexual troops have continued to emphasize professionalism. A Navy supply officer who deployed on a submarine to Afghanistan said, for example, that “most gay people handled themselves very professionally. You didn’t have people running in the streets in tutus and there was no basewide fanfare.”⁴⁰ Third, prior to the enactment of the new policy, only a small minority of those who opposed repeal felt strongly about the issue. A 2006 Zogby poll of 545 troops who had fought in Iraq and Afghanistan found that 72 percent were personally comfortable interacting with gays and that of the 20 percent who were uncomfortable, only 5 percent were “very” uncomfortable.⁴¹ Fourth, some troops who strongly opposed repeal had never knowingly served alongside LGB peers, and their concerns may have been based, in part, on expectations of what would occur after repeal rather than actual experiences. When those who opposed repeal and who did not know any LGB peers had a chance to interact knowingly with gays and lesbians after the policy transition, attitudes may have shifted in some cases.⁴²

Some have claimed that insufficient time has passed to assess the impact of DADT repeal. We agree that it is not yet possible to tell the complete story of DADT repeal, because some important issues remain unresolved and LGB troops may become more visible as time passes, possibly creating new tensions. That said, there is little merit to the claim that insufficient time has passed to assess the impact of repeal. If repeal were going to cause adjustment problems, at least some of those problems, or indications of their imminence, should have emerged in the immediate wake of the policy transition, when a culture shock was still possible.

The conclusion of our research coincided with the one-year anniversary of the repeal of DADT. Based on the substantial evidence we gathered, we conclude that, during this one-year period, DADT repeal has had no negative impact on overall military readiness or its component parts: unit cohesion, recruitment, retention, assaults, harassment, or morale. While repeal produced a few downsides for some military members—mostly those who personally opposed the policy change—we identified important upsides as well, and in no case did negative consequences outweigh advantages. On balance, DADT repeal appears to have slightly enhanced the military's ability to do its job by clearing away unnecessary obstacles to the development of trust and bonding. Although the story of DADT repeal will continue to unfold over time, available evidence indicates that in its first year, the new policy has not had any overall negative effect on the armed forces, and that predictions of dire consequences were incorrect.

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Notes

1. The views expressed by faculty at US Government Agencies are those of the individuals and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of their respective Service Academies, their Service Branches, the Department of Defense, or the US Government. Nonmilitary institutional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only and do not convey the institutions' positions.
2. For pre-repeal research suggesting that the presence of openly serving LGB troops would not impact cohesion and readiness, see, for example, Bonnie Moradi and Laura Miller, "Attitudes of Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans toward Gay and Lesbian Service Members," *Armed Forces & Society* 36, 3, (2009): 397-419; and National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993).

3. The statement was released in March 2009, with 1,050 retired generals and admirals listed as signatories. Elaine Donnelly reported that by May 2010, 1,167 had signed. See “Flag & General Officers for the Military,” accessed July 10, 2012, <http://www.cmrlink.org/HMilitary.asp?docID=350>. For a review of the rationale behind DADT, see Nathaniel Frank, *Unfriendly Fire: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and Weakens America* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2009).
4. To recruit participants, we placed an advertisement on the websites of *Military Times* newspapers for 50,000 clicks/page views. Although the results of our survey are consistent with other data, the low response rate undermines their validity and reliability, and we did not rely on them to reach our conclusions.
5. For the extended version of this study, please visit www.palmcenter.org.
6. Cid Standifer, “Survey: DADT repeal has less impact than expected,” *Military Times*, March 12, 2012.
7. Statement by General (ret.), May 1, 2012; Interview with Lieutenant General (ret.), May 4, 2012; Interview with Brigadier General (ret.) May 15, 2012; Interview with Brigadier General (ret.), May 1, 2012; Interview with Major General (ret.), May 4, 2012.
8. Interview #54, April 11, 2012; Interview #42, March 27, 2012; Interview #55, April 13, 2012; Interview #38, March 2, 2012; Interview #51, April 9, 2012; Interview #49, April 13, 2012. For interview details, see Appendix G of the extended version of this study.
9. Interview #38, March 2, 2012; Interview #50, April 11, 2012.
10. Interview with Dr. Jay Goodwin, April 2, 2012; Interview with Professor John Allen Williams, April 3, 2012; Interview with Professor David Kaiser, March 29, 2012; Interview with Professor David Levy, March 22, 2012. The 2010 Pentagon report on DADT is US Department of Defense, *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,”* November 30, 2010.
11. Dave Boyer, “Public ‘Readily Accepts’ Rights for Gays, Obama Tells Donors,” *Washington Times*, February 10, 2012. Matthew Hay Brown, “A Smooth Turn from ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’” *Baltimore Sun*, May 20, 2012; Anna Mulrine, “Panetta: No Hitches in Military’s Repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 10, 2012; “‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Repeal Going Well,” *UPI*, March 20, 2012.
12. We administered our survey exclusively to active-duty members of OutServe. While it would be unsurprising if units composed exclusively of heterosexual troops maintained a steady rate of readiness after repeal, units including openly LGB troops should have been the most likely to suffer a drop in readiness after the policy change. That said, nonequivalent group designs are vulnerable to the criticism that observed differences are the result of the nonequivalence, not the intervention.
13. Of the 792 active-duty service members and mobilized reservists who completed the survey, 150 (18.9 percent) indicated that since DADT was repealed, someone in their units disclosed being gay or bisexual. Of those, 32 (21.3 percent) said that the disclosure had a negative impact on their units. In addition, 36 (4.5 percent) reported that since DADT was repealed, an openly gay or bisexual person joined their units. Of those, 12 (33.3 percent) said that the newcomer had a negative impact on their units. There was some overlap in that eight respondents reported a negative impact from a disclosure as well as from an LGB newcomer. Therefore,

a total of 36 (32 + 12 – 8) discrete service members reported a negative impact from either a disclosure or from an LGB newcomer. Thus, $36/792 = 4.5$ percent of respondents indicated that after DADT repeal, their units were negatively impacted when someone disclosed being gay or bisexual or when an openly gay or bisexual person joined their units. For results of annual *Military Times* polls, see “Military Times Poll,” accessed July 12, 2012, <http://militarytimes.com/projects/polls/>. We thank *Military Times* for sharing raw survey data.

14. In response to a question asking, “How would you rate your unit’s level of training for its wartime mission?” 57 percent of 2011 respondents answered that they were very well trained or well trained (29 percent adequate, 10 percent poor or very poor, 4 percent not sure), but 62 percent of 2012 respondents said that they were very well trained or well trained (27 percent adequate, 7 percent poor or very poor, 4 percent not sure). In response to a question about the overall quality of military officers, 60 percent of 2011 respondents answered that they were excellent or good (26 percent average, 14 percent fair or poor), but 63 percent of 2012 respondents said that they were excellent or good (24 percent average, 13 percent fair or poor). In response to a question about the overall quality of enlisted leaders in the military, 62 percent of 2011 respondents answered that they were excellent or good (25 percent average, 13 percent fair or poor), but 64 percent of 2012 respondents said that they were excellent or good (24 percent average, 12 percent fair or poor). In response to a question asking if “today’s service members are better than they have ever been,” 61 percent of 2011 respondents agreed or strongly agreed (28 percent neutral, 21 percent disagree or strongly disagree), but 52 percent of 2012 respondents agreed or strongly agreed (27 percent neutral, 21 percent disagree or strongly disagree). For complete 2011 and 2012 survey results, see “Military Times Poll.”
15. Interview #55, April 13, 2012.
16. Scholars distinguish between task cohesion, which refers to whether or not group members pursue a common mission, and social cohesion, which refers to whether or not they share bonds of trust. See Robert MacCoun, Elizabeth Kier, and Aaron Belkin, “Does Social Cohesion Determine Motivation in Combat? An Old Question with an Old Answer,” *Armed Forces & Society* 32, 4 (2006): 646-54.
17. Boyer, “Public ‘Readily Accepts’ Rights for Gays, Obama Tells Donors”; Brown, “A Smooth Turn from ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’” May 20, 2012; Interview with Professor Martin Cook, March 22, 2012.
18. Chris Johnson, “Obama Raises \$1.4 Million at D.C. LGBT Fundraiser,” *Washington Blade*, February 9, 2012; Karen Parrish, “Report Shows Success of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Repeal,” *American Forces Press Service*, May 10, 2012.
19. Morten G. Ender, David E. Rohall, Andrew J. Brennan, Michael D. Matthews, and Irving Smith, “Civilian, ROTC, and Military Academy Undergraduate Attitudes toward Homosexuals in the U.S. Military,” *Armed Forces & Society*, 38, 1 (January 2012): 164-72. Although this paper was completed before repeal, Ender and his colleagues have collected additional data in 2012, and those data confirm that post-repeal, academy and ROTC cadets have become more tolerant of LGB peers.
20. Significance: $p < .01$.
21. Respondent #4, Palm Center survey. Active Duty Marine Sergeant, MOS: Light Attack Helicopter Squadron.

22. For survey responses cited in the previous paragraph, see “Military Times Poll.” The Army Reserve exceeded its goal, reaching 104 percent of its target, and the Marine Corps Reserve also exceeded its goal at 106 percent of its target. The Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard all met their targets at 100 percent. According to the press release, “all reserve components are on target to achieve their fiscal year attrition goals.” The Army National Guard (ANG) was the only reserve component that did not meet its recruitment target in 2012, reaching only 95 percent of its goal. However, trend data suggest that the shortfall had nothing to do with DADT repeal. The ANG’s post-repeal recruitment numbers mirrored its pre-repeal totals, indicating that repeal was not a likely factor in its performance. In FY 2011, the ANG was the only reserve component to fail to meet its goal, achieving 96 percent of its target.
23. Matthew Schofield, “Impact of Ending Military’s ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Law Negligible,” *McClatchy Newspapers*, April 3, 2012.
24. Keith Alexander, “Prosecutor Says Marine Fatal Stabbing Was a Hate Crime,” *Washington Post*, May 16, 2012.
25. “‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Repeal Going Well,” *UPI*, March 20, 2012, Correspondence with Aubrey Sarvis, Executive Director, SLDN, July 2 and 9, 2012.
26. Headquarters, Department of the Army, *2020 Generating Health & Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset; Report 2012*, 2012, 122.
27. The question asked, “Since DADT has been repealed, have you experienced, from your commander or other service member, any forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation? Please explain.” OutServe administered the survey in December 2011, and 327 respondents answered the question about discrimination. Approximately 89 percent said they had not experienced discrimination, declined to answer, or indicated that any incidents were minor. The percentages are approximate due to subjectivity in coding. For example, the response “No, one incident of minor taunting but that’s it” was counted as a “no.” Also see A. J. Walkley, “Command Sergeant Major Allegedly Assaults Lesbian Captain at Military Ball,” *Huffington Post*, April 20, 2012.
28. Office of the Inspector General, US Department of Defense, *Military Environment with Respect to the Homosexual Conduct Policy*, March 16, 2000, 4.
29. Of the 327 respondents, 17.4 percent responded “very mixed,” 4 percent said “mostly negatively,” and 6.1 percent did not answer.
30. Interview #2, April 19, 2012.
31. In response to a question about their overall quality of life, 68 percent of 2011 respondents answered that it was excellent or good (22 percent average, 11 percent fair or poor), but 71 percent of 2012 respondents said that it was excellent or good (20 percent average, 9 percent fair or poor). In response to a question about job satisfaction, 79 percent of 2011 respondents answered that they were completely or somewhat satisfied (20 percent completely or somewhat dissatisfied), but 87 percent of 2012 respondents said that they were completely or somewhat satisfied (13 percent completely or somewhat dissatisfied, 1 percent no opinion). In response to a question asking whether they would recommend a military career to others, 76 percent of 2011 respondents said yes (13 percent no, 10 percent undecided), but 88 percent of 2012 respondents said yes (8 percent no, 4 percent undecided). For complete 2011 and 2012 survey results, see “Military Times Poll.”

32. "Military Times Poll." We derived the percentage of heterosexual troops who reported a decrease in morale as well as those who oppose the new policy of open service from raw data provided by *Military Times*. According to the January 2012 *Military Times* survey of 751 heterosexual, active duty and mobilized service members, 13.7 percent report that DADT repeal "had a negative impact on my morale" and 30.6 percent of troops disagreed that "openly homosexual people should be allowed to serve in the military." *Military Times* data indicate that age had relatively little effect on whether DADT repeal undermined personal morale. Among younger respondents, 5.8 percent said that repeal had a positive impact on their morale, 13.4 percent reported a negative impact, and 80.8 percent reported no effect. Among respondents aged thirty-nine and above, the totals were 3.6 percent, 13.3 percent, and 83.1 percent, respectively. That said, younger respondents were more likely to agree that LGB troops should be allowed to serve openly (52.7 percent among younger respondents vs. 42.5 percent among older respondents). To obtain these results, we split *Military Times* respondents into two groups on the basis of their median age, 38.5. We excluded respondents who did not report their age from these analyses.
33. Interview #28, April 30, 2012.
34. Interview #2, April 19, 2012.
35. Interview with Professor James Parco, March 13, 2012.
36. For a recent review of the literature on the determinants of military morale, see Thomas W. Britt and James M. Dickinson, "Morale during Military Operations: A Positive Psychology Approach," in *Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat* 1, ed. Thomas W. Britt, Carl Castro and Amy B. Adler, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 157-184.
37. *Report of the Comprehensive Review*, 89-92; National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: An Update of RAND's 1993 Study* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), 275-320; National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993), 65-105; Nathaniel Frank, "Gays in Foreign Militaries 2010: A Global Primer," Palm Center, 2010, accessed July 27, 2012, <http://bit.ly/f5JyAb>; Aaron Belkin, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Is the Gay Ban Based on Military Necessity?" *Parameters* 33, 2 (Summer, 2003): 108-19.
38. US Department of Defense, *Support Plan for Implementation to the Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"*, November 30, 2010
39. We derived these results from raw data provided by *Military Times*.
40. Interview #12, April 21, 2012.
41. Sam Rodgers, "Opinions of Military Personnel on Sexual Minorities in the Military," *Zogby International*, December 2006, accessed July 10, 2012, <http://www.palmcenter.org/files/active/1/ZogbyReport.pdf>.
42. Gregory M. Herek and Aaron Belkin, "Sexual Orientation and Military Service: Prospects for Organizational and Individual Change in the United States," in *Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat* 4, ed. Thomas W. Britt, Carl Castro, and Amy B. Adler, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 134.

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