

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW WORKING GROUP,  
RE THE PROPOSED REPEAL OF 10 U.S.C. 654**

**STATEMENT OF: GENERAL NORTON A. SCHWARTZ  
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

**DECEMBER 3, 2010**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED  
BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

The study by the Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG), regarding the proposed repeal of 10 U.S.C. 654, confirms that approximately 70% of the Air Force see positive, mixed, or no effect in allowing gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual Airmen to serve openly in the U.S. Air Force, with approximately 30% who do not. This favorability distribution runs slightly higher for the spouse survey—at about 75:25—but lower for close-combat Air Force skill specialties, at around 60:40.

The study also recognizes a number of complicating factors—among them: cohabitation, privacy, and universal benefits—which will require focused attention and, in time, will be accommodated satisfactorily. It is my assessment that the U.S. Air Force can implement a repeal of Section 654 and the policy commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” with modest risk to military readiness and effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting, and retention of your Airmen. If the law changes, the Air Force will pursue implementation of repeal thoroughly, professionally, and with conviction.

Nonetheless, my best military judgment does not agree with the study assessment that the short-term risk to military effectiveness is low. It is an inescapable fact that our officer and non-commissioned officer leaders in Afghanistan, in particular, are carrying a heavy load. Therefore, even while the demands of close combat affect relatively few Airmen in contrast to personnel of the other Services, I remain concerned with the outlook for low short-term risk of repeal to military effectiveness in Afghanistan.

I acknowledge that the study findings indicate that, under the pressure of combat, attitudes of our close-combat skilled personnel, regarding “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” seem to moderate. After all, survival is a powerful instinct. Still, it is difficult for me, as a member of the Joint Chiefs, to recommend placing any additional discretionary demands on our leadership cadres in Afghanistan at this particularly challenging time. I therefore recommend deferring certification and full implementation until 2012, while initiating training and education efforts soon after you take any decision to repeal.

Finally, I emphasize and add my strong endorsement to Secretary Gates’ advice that legislative action on this issue is far more preferable to a decision by the courts, insofar as we would be afforded much less latitude to properly calibrate implementation. Precipitous repeal is not where your Armed Forces wants to be.