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The Stouffer Report: Keep “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Policy

We have an obligation as lawmakers in the Missouri General Assembly to enact laws and urge Congress to follow the will of the people of Missouri. This is the goal of a resolution I have filed in the Missouri Senate.

Recently, the president said he wants to work with Congress and the military to repeal the nation’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) policy, which allows homosexuals to serve in the U.S. military — as long as they are not open about their sexual preference. This is a policy that has been around since 1993, when it was established by then-President Clinton by executive order. Since then, it has been upheld by the courts on five different occasions.

On February 2, I introduced [Senate Concurrent Resolution 45](#), which asks Congress to continue to support DADT. We are in the middle of two conflicts, one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, and this is simply not the time to be waging a “cultural war.” This has been a proven policy that is working to maintain the military’s high standards of order and unit cohesion. This is vital to our fighting men and women overseas.

Out of approximately two million service men and women, a small percentage (approximately 600 individuals) are discharged every year because of DADT. Those who say the policy should be lifted argue enlisting openly homosexual men and

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-  Recent Topics
-  Local News
-  Visit the Capitol
-  My Legislation
-  About Me
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women would increase the number of recruits into the military, but clearly the numbers suggest we are not losing a large number of service members because of the policy.



There are more than a dozen resolutions floating around in the Missouri Legislature right now that address a wide range of topics. What folks need to remember about resolutions is that these measures try to maintain the balance of power between state and federal government. Remember, the 10th Amendment spells out state sovereignty. It was the states that created the federal government during the early years of our country. It is our duty to represent our citizens and stay on top of the matters that are taken up by lawmakers in Washington, D.C.

I hope our leaders on Capitol Hill hear the wishes and the words of the American people as they consider the president's plan to reverse a policy that has served our country for more than 15 years. Hopefully, our resolution will make it through both the Missouri Senate and House and deliver our message loud and clear to keep the status quo, which has proven it to be a good policy.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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