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Congressman Wants 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Repealed

U.S. Rep. Ben Cardin, D-Md., joined 115 members of Congress on July 5 in supporting the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, a bill to repeal the federal "don't ask, don't tell" ban on queer military personnel. He represents Maryland's 3rd District, which includes the U.S. Naval Academy and parts of the city of Baltimore. Cardin is the third member of the Maryland delegation to co-sponsor the bill.

"Congressional leaders in large military districts are increasingly speaking out against 'don't ask, don't tell,'" said C. Dixon Osburn, executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. "Congressman Cardin's support of repeal legislation honors those 65,000 lesbian, gay and bisexual service members serving silently at the Naval Academy and elsewhere in the world. His sponsorship of this legislation sends a clear message that repealing 'don't ask, don't tell' is in the best interest of our armed forces and of our nation."

U.S. Rep. Marty Meehan, D-Mass., introduced the act in March 2005. The legislation would repeal the military's prohibition on open service by queer recruits and replace it with a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Since 1993, more than 10,000 men and women have been discharged under the "don't ask, don't tell" law at a cost of at least \$363.8 million, according to a study from University of California at Santa Barbara.

Report: Gay Marriage Benefits Kids

A report in the July 5 issue of *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, shows that legal recognition for same-gender partners benefits their children.

The 16-page report, which includes a review of the growing body of medical literature on same-gender parenting, concludes that "children of same-gender parents often experience economic, legal and familial insecurity as a result of the absence of legal recognition of their bonds to non-biological parents" and that "legal recognition of a [same-gender] spouse can increase the ability of adult couples to provide and care for one another and fosters a nurturing and secure environment for their children." The 2000 census found that same-gender couples are raising children in 96 percent of all U.S. counties.

Dr. Ellen C. Perrin, director of developmental-behavioral pediatrics and the Center for Children with Special Needs at the Floating Hospital for

Children Tufts-New England Medical Center and one of the authors of the report, said: "The scientific data overwhelmingly demonstrate that there is no relationship between parents' sexual orientation and any measure of children's emotional, psychosocial and behavioral adjustment. We conclude that civil marriage is beneficial to children, regardless of the gender of the parents, because it strengthens families and helps foster financial and legal security, psychosocial stability and an augmented sense of societal acceptance and support."

NEW YORK

Court Denies Protections to Same-Sex Couples

By a 4-2 vote, the New York Court of Appeals elected July 6 to uphold a state law that bars same-sex couples from marriage and denies them the hundreds of family protections provided to married couples.

In the decision, the court accepted the justifications advanced for the law by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. Pointing out that straight couples can conceive children by "accident" while gay couples can only have children with advance planning, Bloomberg and Spitzer argued that straight couples need the stability of marriage, but gay couples do not.

The court also accepted an argument that had been rejected by the Arkansas Supreme Court just a week earlier, when it struck down a policy barring gay people from serving as foster parents: the notion that children of mixed-gender parents are more likely to thrive. In its embrace of this contention, the court ignored the advice of leading child health and welfare organizations and dismissed decades of social science research proving that same-sex couples are as capable of being good parents as straight people and that their children are equally well-adjusted.

Chief Justice Judith Kaye was joined by Judge Carmen Ciparick in a stinging dissent. "This state has a proud tradition of affording equal rights to all New Yorkers. Sadly, the court today retreats from that proud tradition," Kaye wrote. "I am confident that future generations will look back on today's decision as an unfortunate misstep."

MASSACHUSETTS

Marriage Vote Postponed

The Massachusetts constitutional convention recessed July 12 without considering an amendment that would have effectively overruled the state high court's 2004 decision legalizing same-sex marriage.

The convention has recessed until Nov. 9, leaving the fate of the pending initiative petition proposal uncertain. However, rights advocates were accentuating the positive.

"We are relieved that the Massachusetts Legislature recessed without taking up the immoral amendment seeking to overturn marriage equality in the Bay State," said Matt

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This scene from the 2002 Gay Games in Sydney, Australia, wasn't available by podcast, but this year's Games will be.