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President Obama signs legislation to repeal the policy known as 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'

Rights Group Applauds End of Ban "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repealed after 18 years

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After 18-years of being forced to hide their identity, the law which required gay men and women to conceal their identity while serving in the Armed Forces, has been repealed.

On Sept. 20, the policy known as "Don't ask, Don't Tell," which was made into law in 1993 during a national debate over the role of gay women and men in the military, came to an official end after more than 13,000 service members had been discharged under terms of the Congressional action.

"The key thing here is that there are military personnel who have been putting their lives on the line for this country, and yet, they couldn't be true to who they are and experience the freedom they fight for," said Jeana Frazzini, executive director of the statewide LGBTQ advocacy organization Basic Rights Oregon.

Frazzini said because the military is a significant institution in this country, the repeal is a sign of the larger momentum for equality. "This is one piece of that bigger picture," she said.

President Obama campaigned

with a promise to end the policy which was enacted after the Pentagon strongly opposed an attempt by former president Clinton to lift the ban on gays in the military entirely. Although the repeal seemed hopeful in early 2010, a delay was catalyzed by Senate Republicans who detained action until Democrats forced a vote last December.

The repeal followed a ruling by a federal Judge in California that the law was unconstitutional. In July, the decision was upheld by a three-judge panel which ordered that the

continued ▼ on page 6



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