

# OUR VIEW: 'Don't ask, don't tell' policy needs to go

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Societal pressures forced gay men and lesbians to live under a sort of "don't ask, don't tell" doctrine for generations.

In 1993, that policy became the U.S. military's official means of conveniently overlooking the fact that homosexuals are among its ranks.

It's time the military came out of the closet, and allowed its soldiers to do the same.

President Barack Obama is in a position to do just that, with both Congress and public opinion in his corner.

He is under pressure from gay rights activists to sign an executive order repealing the de facto ban on gays in the military, and a White House spokesman told the Associated Press that the president "is intent on making progress" on the issue.

Let's hope he puts pen to paper sooner rather than later.

Gays and lesbians are fighting and dying for our country on battlefronts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and serving in various other capacities at every level in the armed forces.

Letting them live openly is the least we can do to acknowledge their contributions and sacrifices.

Imagine the furor if the military instituted a "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding religious preference.

To gays and lesbians, being told to keep mum about their lifestyle is no different.

They're not seeking special rights, just the basic human right of being able to present themselves in the manner they see fit.

Allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly won't cost America any wars, or put any U.S. soldiers at a higher risk on the battlefield.

What it will do is grant them the same privileges afforded to their peers in workplaces throughout the country.

Homosexuals are proudly serving the United States every hour of every day.

Our nation and its military should be just as proud of them.

- **Doug Bauer**, for the editorial board