

In his State of the Union speech, President Obama repeated his pledge to repeal the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prevents openly gay men and women from serving in the armed forces.

I have always believe that was a misguided policy, and I support the president's call for repeal. The "don't ask, don't tell" policy is wrong, plain and simple. And it's wrong for many reasons.

There are practical reasons why the policy needs to change. Although the president has indicated he wants to bring the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan to a close, there is a continued need for troops there. But the military continues to reject soldiers because of their sexual orientation.

Even worse, some of the soldiers being kicked out of the military hold some of the most important skills, including Arabic and Farsi translators. Overall, more than 13,000 soldiers have been dropped from the ranks because of "don't ask, don't tell."

And then there are the moral issues. Why do we classify gay and lesbian soldiers as inferior? Racism and sexism aren't allowed in the military, but homophobia is. That's simply wrong.

There's support from many sides. The public overwhelmingly supports a repeal of this policy. Military brass, both current and former, support a repeal. And both houses of Congress have bills moving toward passage.

I think it's time that this policy goes away.

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