

Momentum

Special Edition

Spring 1993

OPERATION



LIFT THE BAN

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FUND

Letters Needed to Lift the Military Ban

As the Senate Armed Service Committee continues its hearings on lesbians and gays in the military — and as the White House floats trial balloons that might restrict the jobs lesbian and gay personnel may perform — it is more important than ever for our community to increase the grassroots pressure on Congress. This special edition of *Momentum* is designed to enable you to take immediate action to insure that your Senators and Representative know that you oppose continuing the ban on lesbians and gay men in the military.

As a member of the Campaign Fund, your support has enabled us to hire lobbyists, contribute to candidates and build grassroots support for the issues that are vitally important to our community. Now, we need to do even more. On page 3 of this issue, we have printed a draft letter to your federal legislators. Please make time within the next day or so to write to your Senators, in your own words, telling them that you strongly support ending the current policy of discrimination.

It is very important that you write to your Senators as soon as possible. Our opponents are mobilizing their multi-million dollar grassroots engines, and our voices are being ignored. In some offices on Capitol Hill, the telephone calls and letters are going against us at a rate of 100 to 1. Your letter, and letters from other Campaign Fund members, can turn the tide and insure that your Senators are hearing from people who want to see discrimination eliminated in the military and in American life.

The Campaign Fund has made a tremendous effort in the last few months to build public support for ending the military ban. During the last weekend of March, our Board of Directors and Board of Governors sponsored over 100 "Operation Lift the Ban" events in more than twenty cities throughout the country. At Town Meetings, fundraisers, and "Speak Out" canvassing events, we've made a great effort to strengthen our grassroots forces and raise funds for lobbying and public education. In addition to our ten member public policy department, we've hired the Washington, D.C. lobbying firm of Griffin/Johnson and Associates to assist in the critical work of lobbying the Senate. We've organized phone banking operations in critical states to encourage phone calls to Capitol Hill, and we've joined with other national organizations in creating the Campaign for Military Service, a coalition group building support for an end to the ban. Today, we need your help in writing to Congress, and in encouraging your friends, neighbors and coworkers to join us in this historic effort.

Along with this special issue, we are enclosing a pamphlet detailing ten things every supporter of the Campaign Fund can do to help us in our work on Capitol Hill. This effort to end the military ban will not be won by lobbyists alone. We need your immediate help if our efforts in Washington are going to have an impact. Please take a moment to read this special issue of *Momentum*, write letters to your Senators and Representatives, and follow up with some of the other suggestions made in the *Join the Forces, Lift the Ban* pamphlet. Also, plan to join us on April 25th for the 3rd *March On Washington*. Call 202-628-4160 if you need information.

An Urgent Appeal from Capitol Hill

As a member of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, you know better than most how important it is for citizens to be involved in the legislative process. As the Senate hearings on the military ban convene, a major factor that will determine the outcome of this fight against discrimination is the extent to which our Congressional colleagues hear from their constituents on this issue. The single most important thing you can do to fight discrimination in the military is to write to the three people who represent you in the United States House and Senate, and to encourage your family, friends and colleagues to do the same. Members of Congress are influenced far more by expressions of opinion from the people in their own constituencies than they are by other sources.

We all know that there will again be organized efforts to flood the Congress with constituent communications opposing the President's commitment to lift the ban. It is essential that we and our supporters within the larger community do everything possible to offset this effort. With your help, this fight can be won.

*Rep. Gerry Studds (D-Mass.)
Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.)*


Speak Out Programs Let Your Voice Be Heard

In the past four months, Speak Out participants have sent over 100,000 urgent telegrams to Congress, the Pentagon, and President Clinton supporting an end to the military ban through the Campaign Fund's Speak Out program. If you are not currently enrolled in Speak Out, we strongly encourage you to do so today. Speak Out, more than any other grassroots program in the lesbian and gay community, guarantees that your voice is heard before Congress votes on critical issues facing our community.

Speak Out proved to be decisive during the Senate's debate on the military ban in the early weeks of the Clinton Administration. On Thursday, January 28, just three days into the two week debate, 26,000 individual Speak Out letters were sent to wavering members of the Senate, urging them to oppose writing the ban into law. Speak Out moved quickly to help counter the right wing, and insured a victory by a vote of 62 to 37 in the Senate.

Since the Speak Out program began three years ago, over 550,000 Speak Out letters have been sent to Congress on lesbian and gay civil rights, AIDS, reproductive freedom, and women's health issues. Speak Out has helped secure victories such as the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act, Immigration Reform, Women's Health legislation, the Ryan White CARE Bill, and the recent Senate vote on gays in the military.

We all need to write personal letters, make phone calls, and be part of the massive Speak Out mailings. To join Speak Out clip the coupon on page four and send it to the Campaign Fund.



| | |
|---|------------------|
| • Your Name • Address • City, State Zip | TELEPOST. |
| • The Honorable (Senator First & Last Name) • United States Senate • Washington, DC 20510 | |
| • Dear Senator (Senator First & Last Name), | |
| • I urge you to support lifting the ban against gay men and lesbians serving in the military. Lesbian and gay Americans are fully able to serve this country as members of the Armed Forces. They should not be forced to fight their country in order to be able to fight for it. The current policy is simply discrimination. | |
| • The experiences of our NATO allies show that military effectiveness is not compromised by the presence of lesbian and gay service members. Your leadership is needed to see that this country lives up to its ideals and that all Americans are treated equally and have the opportunity to serve their country. | |

Talking to Your Members of Congress at Home/Elections

Some members of Congress already are gearing up their campaigns, either for special elections to be held this year or for regular elections in 1994. Many others are holding public meetings in their local areas. Please take every opportunity to speak with candidates and members of Congress. If they ask for your support for their campaign - either for your vote or for a financial contribution - examine their positions on lesbians and gays serving in the military and on our community's other concerns. Let them know that you want them to work to end the ban on lesbians and gays in the military and that your vote will be based on that issue.

Make a Special Pledge to "Freedom"

Your contribution of \$500 will go directly toward the Campaign Fund's effort to lift the military ban and pass a federal lesbian and gay civil rights bill.

For this important contribution we invite you to join us at "FREEDOM", a special dinner during the March on Washington weekend, to honor our gay and lesbian military heroes and the sponsors of the gay and lesbian civil rights bill.

Friday, April 23, 1993

Mayflower Hotel

RSVP: (202) 298-1122 limited seating

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This is a draft letter to Congress on the issue of lesbians and gay men in the military. Please feel free to create your own letter, using examples from your own experience and expressing your personal views, or re-type this letter and insert the name of your senators and representatives. If you do not know the name of your senators or representatives, please call the Campaign Fund's Public Policy Department at 202-628-4160.

The Honorable (Senator or Representative's name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
or
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator/Representative (name),

I am writing to ask for your support in ending discrimination against lesbian and gay people in the military. The United States is one of only three countries in the Western alliance who ban homosexuals, denying our country the service of competent, qualified and well trained personnel. The current policy of discrimination denies able bodied men and women the opportunity to serve our country and costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

Just as prejudice kept African Americans from serving in an integrated Armed Forces until after the Second World War, the military ban on competent lesbian and gay Americans is based on prejudice, fear and unfounded stereotypes. In fact, the Pentagon's own studies show that lesbians and gay men have served as well as have their heterosexual peers.

Lesbian and gay Americans have always served in the military, with no adverse affect on overall readiness or morale. During the Gulf War, the Pentagon stopped its policy of discharging known homosexuals and placed them in combat. There is no evidence that lesbian and gay troops cannot perform well in combat and there is no need to discriminate against them in any position in the military.

President Clinton was elected on a platform that clearly stated his plans to end the ban. I hope that, with your support, he will be able to abolish discrimination in the United States military and throughout our country. I will be watching to see how you vote on this issue and look forward to hearing your views and intended actions on this matter.

Sincerely,

(Your name and address)

Some other points you may wish to use in your letters are printed on page 4. Just select one or two of the points and express your own views. Please send copies of your letters to our Public Policy Department in Washington.

Points to Use in Your Letters to Congress

The Current Policy of Excluding Gay Men, Lesbians and Bisexuals from Service Hurts the Armed Forces:

- The policy excludes competent and qualified people who desire to serve.
- The policy wastes resources spent on training personnel who will later be discharged for homosexuality. A 1992 GAO report found that the government spent \$500 million in the last ten years training, discharging and replacing homosexual servicemembers.
- The policy wastes resources spent on investigations and legal proceedings.
- The policy promotes ignorance and prejudice towards gays and lesbians.
- The policy condones and encourages gay-bashing.
- The policy causes pain and suffering to homosexual service members who are isolated, harassed, interrogated and discharged.
- The policy is used by sexist individuals to harass and discharge women. DOD statistics show that overall women are three times more likely to be discharged for homosexuality than men.
- Discrimination against gay and lesbian Americans damages military credibility by violating the ideal of equality set forth in the Constitution, which the military is sworn to uphold.
- The DOD's own studies have shown that there is no legitimate justification for excluding gay and lesbian Americans from military service.
- The policy itself creates the "security risk" problem.

Ending the Discrimination Would Benefit the Military:

- America would stop wasting the talents of patriotic gay and lesbian Americans who want to serve their country.
- Ending the ban would save millions of taxpayer dollars that do not have to be used to investigate the sexual orientation of servicemembers, stage court martial, or replaced experienced personnel.
- Military commanders will be able to focus on eliminating sexual misconduct, which is the real problem.
- Integration would be easy because gays and lesbians are already serving.
- Military leaders have acknowledged that homosexuals are "top performers".
- Homosexuals already serve successfully in many allied militaries including Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Italy, West Germany and the Netherlands.
- As it did when it integrated blacks and women, the military would once again take on a leadership role in eliminating discrimination in American society.

The Current Policy Does Not Achieve the Goal of Excluding Homosexuals and Bisexuals from the Armed Services:

- Thousands of gays and lesbians have successfully served in the military throughout our history, in peace and in war.
- An estimated 50,000 gay and lesbian personnel served in the Armed Services during the Persian Gulf War.
- Gays and lesbians have been decorated for their valor and service to our country.
- Military officials, including Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and General Colin Powell, have acknowledged that there are thousands of gays and lesbians currently on active duty.
- It is impossible to exclude homosexuals at enlistment because many do not realize they are gay until they are in. The average age of enlistment is 17-18, while the median age of coming out is 19-20.

Support for Ending Military Discrimination is Broad Based:

- The American people elected a president who promised to eliminate the ban on gays and lesbians in the military.
- According to the polls, the majority of Americans believe gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve in the Armed Forces.
- Students and faculty at colleges and universities across the nation are protesting the discrimination practiced by ROTC programs on their campuses.
- Many national organizations have taken a public stand against the policy.
- According to General Colin Powell, military professionals will obey the President's order to end the ban, even if they disagree personally with the policy change.

Homosexuals and Bisexuals are not Security Risks:

- The DOD has not supplied evidence to support the claim that gays and lesbians are security risks.
- There is no documented case in the history of the U.S. security program of a gay man or lesbian compromising national security because of their sexuality, while numerous security breaches are attributable to heterosexual sexual activities.
- A 1991 report by the Defense Personnel Security Research and Educational Center found that homosexuals and heterosexuals are at the same risk for blackmail.
- Homosexual civilian employees of the DOD are allowed to hold high-level security clearances.

I understand that the next several months are critically important for the cause of equal rights for lesbian and gay Americans. I want to make a special contribution to help increase our lobbying and organizing potential during "Operation Lift the Ban." Enclosed is my special contribution of:

_____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ \$500 _____ Federal Club (\$1200)

Name _____

Please charge my contribution to
MasterCard _____ or Visa _____

Address _____

Account Number _____
Exp. Date _____

Phone _____

City/State/Zip _____

Signature _____

☐ Sign me up for Speak Out, send me an enrollment form

☐ Send me information on the Federal Club

☐ I want to volunteer as a Speak Out canvasser, call me. Phone _____