

The Domino Effect of Repealing DADT | Gay News from Gay Agenda - GayAgenda.com



There's a very interesting perspective on the possible repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell that goes well beyond the simple thought of letting openly gay men and women from serving in the armed forces. One of the questions which is being considered as part of the domino effect that would take place with the repeal is; Will spouses of gay soldiers be allowed benefits afforded to spouses of straight service men and women?

Since the draft ended in 1973, benefits provided to spouses have been widely utilized as an incentive to recruit and retain military personnel and currently over 50% of U.S. troops are married.

Benefits provided for spouses of married service members include college tuition and the right of a spouse to be at a wounded service member's bedside. Military spouses have access to military health care and commissaries across the globe and married service members also receive higher pay and better housing during times of war.

The only way to qualify for those benefits however is a marriage certificate and being that same-sex marriage is legal in five states and Washington, D.C. recognition of gay marriages by the military and the benefits thereof would become an issue if the ban were lifted.

Repealing the ban without offering spousal benefits wouldn't constitute equality but because the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act prohibits the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages it's unclear as to whether or not those benefits would legally have to be provided to same-sex spouses.

This reinforces my thought that opposition to repealing 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' isn't really so much about allowing openly gay men and women from serving, but rather it's feared as a gateway to marriage equality on a national level. Again, how could the U.S. government justify allowing people who don't have equal rights under the law serve our country? Obviously a war the religious right, who has spent millions and millions of dollars to win, would ultimately lose.