ATLANTA -- *Following is a statement from Danny Ingram, National President of American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER), on yesterday's full certification of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Repeal Act of 2010* :

America is not a great nation because of our weatlh, though we are certainly among the most wealthy nations in the world. America is not great because of our power, though we have the most powerful military in human history. America is great and unique among all the nations of the earth because of our undying devotion to the fullness of freedom, the idea that every citizen, no matter how vast our differences, is entitled to the same equal rights as every other citizen. On September 20, 2011, when the repeal of DADT takes effect, a group of Americans, once the victims of discrimination by the very guardians of our nation's liberty, will be discriminated against no more. On that day, all Americans will witness our own evolution as the United States becomes a more free society. On that day, "we the people" will take a further step towards our collective destiny as the most free, equal, and diverse people in human endeavor.

Few Americans, even few Presidents, can claim they have helped America fufill her destiny of freedom. AVER wishes to thank Barack H. Obama, President of the United States of America, and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, for fulfilling his promise to end the military's policy of discrimination against gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members. He has earned his place in history.

We also wish to thank every individual, every nameless American, who raised their voice or put pen to paper to fight against an injustice that not only harmed our military by removing qualified service members essential to the success of defending our homeland, but also undermined the very liberty that all service members have sworn to defend. Indeed, such changes as this are only made possible when hearts and minds are changed one at a time, when Americans find the courage and commitment to challenge each other to be true to ourselves as a free people. To all of those people, and the many organizations they represent, we wish to express our thanks for this victory.

As veterans we stand with pride today, in knowing that our actions have contributed to the uplifting of the liberty we each swore to defend. I wish to personally thank each member of AVER, some who have passed from this life, for your dedication for these long years of service and struggle. If any should doubt the commitment of those who take an oath to defend America's sacred freedom, let them look to you. When uniforms have grown dusty and memories begin to fade, you never forgot your promise to stand tall in the defense of liberty.

There are those today who believe America's best days are behind her. Her greatness has faded. They believe the experiment of unity from diversity has ended. The dream has filled up. We have lost our taste for the challenge. To them I can only say "Look to the dawn of September 20th. On that day the sun will rise across a nation more free than the day before."

The dream is alive. The experiment continues. The proof is before you now. Open your eyes and your minds and see for yourselves the truth of dreams become real. America's greatness continues, and it expands to encompass those forced too long to live in the darkness of misunderstanding. For America's greatness lies not in heavy vaults or flags unfurled around a tightly fettered world, but in the unbound fullness of human hearts that beat with the pulse of freedom. In that pulse, that living desire, America, awakening anew each day, breathes the untarnished promise of her ever growing greatness.

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