

PRESS RELEASE



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Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America, Inc.

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RELEASE# 97-05

MARCH 20, 1997

GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL VETERANS OF AMERICA
RELEASE "LEXINGTON DECLARATION"

At their February convention aboard the USS Lexington in Corpus Christi, Texas; delegates of the **GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC. (GLBVA)** called upon the organization's officers to prepare and distribute a declaration in the form of a letter to President Bill Clinton and members of congress. The delegates instructed GLBVA's officers to inform the President of the organization's appreciation and support of his administration while strongly expressing dissatisfaction with the current **DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL, DON'T PURSUE** policy. The group unanimously stated that the **LEXINGTON DECLARATION** should call on the President to finally honor his promise to lift the ban and take immediate action on this issue.

The text of the LEXINGTON DECLARATION follows:

THE LEXINGTON DECLARATION
FEBRUARY 16, 1997

**Closing Session of the National Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America Convention
aboard the U.S.S. Lexington in Corpus Christi, Texas**

President Clinton

cc Members of Congress

We, the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America want to thank all of you for what you have done for us over the last four years of this administration. But we want you to know that it falls far short of our expectations.

Four years ago you made a promise to lift the ban on gays in the military. We are still holding you to that promise. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" may be a reasonable compromise in your opinion, but is totally unacceptable to all of us. If you think it is working, just look at the numbers of servicemembers that are still being thrown out every year. As American citizens, we expected you to do the right thing for all of us.

All Americans expect certain things from their elected representatives. The least being the basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution, which we have all fought for and sworn to defend. Gay American men and women continue to put their lives on the line for all of us and for this country, but we are still treated as second class citizens, the victims of American apartheid. No heterosexual person would put up with "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue." Why should we?

In spite of the years of discrimination, maltreatment and continuing government sanctioned witch hunts, we remain loyal to the principles of justice and equality for all. We fought for our country before, and we are fighting for our country now, in and out of the military. Far too many American lives have been ruined by this insane policy. The time to end the ban is now, and you, as President of the United States, are legally and morally bound to use your powers to do so.

That no service go unrewarded.

James C. Darby, President
Nancy Russell, Vice President
James Donovan, Secretary
Millard Tips, Treasurer
Mack Thomas III, Regional Coordinator

GLBVA, Inc. is the only national non-profit organization for gay, lesbian and bisexual active duty, reserve and veteran members of the United States Armed Forces, their families, friends and supporters.