

PRESS RELEASE



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Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America, Inc.

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GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.
RELEASE "DENVER DECLARATION"

At their March conference in Denver, Colorado; 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 growing concern over increased harassment and violations of the flawed "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL, DON'T PURSUE" policy.

The text of the **DENVER DECLARATION** follows:

THE DENVER DECLARATION

MARCH 14, 1998

**CLOSING SESSION OF THE NATIONAL GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL VETERANS
OF AMERICA CONFERENCE, DENVER, COLORADO**

President Clinton

CC Members of Congress

A year has passed since the *Lexington Declaration*. You may recall that in the *Lexington Declaration* we cited the deficiency of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" policy. Since the *Lexington Declaration* the situation has deteriorated

even further: more servicemembers, whether gay, lesbian or straight, have fallen victim to the military's relentless violations of the policy.

In May 1997, officers of our organization, Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA) met with Richard Socarides, Special Assistant to the President And Senior Advisor for Public Liaison, and with Mr. Frederick Pang, Assistant to Gen. Shalikashvili, again calling attention to the military's flawed implementation of the policy.

In the fourth annual report on violations of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue", titled *Conduct Unbecoming* (February 1998), Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) documented a 27% increase in the number of command violations occurring in 1997.

In the last several months, the military's handling of COP Timothy McVeigh's case has focused the nation's attention on such violations.

Why is it that after years of efforts by GLBVA, SLDN, the news media and the courts, nothing has been done to correct the military's flagrant disregard of the intent of this policy?

The policy should not exist in the first place but since it does, it is imperative that it is carried out by the military services consistent with the intent on Congress. The military must not ask, must not require servicemembers to tell and must not pursue. This is not a difficult concept to understand!

Gay, lesbian and bisexual servicemembers have served throughout our country's history, and continue to serve. While serving their country in defense of freedom and justice, it is not acceptable in a democracy for these men and women to be denied their rights as Patriotic Americans.

We, gay, lesbian and bisexual veterans expect this administration to honor its commitment that Americans may server their country without discrimination - a discrimination which should not exist in a free society.

That no service go unrewarded.

James C. Darby, President

Nancy Russell, Vice President

James Donovan, Secretary

Millard Tips, Treasurer

Mack Thomas III, Regional Coordinator