

## 1119a5 DADT: Broad Support for Military Service by Gays – 12/15/10

Seventy-seven percent of Americans support allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the U.S. military, the most in polling back 17 years, capping a dramatic long-term shift in public attitudes on the issue.

That result in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll comes as the House prepares to vote on legislation that would repeal the current “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, a measure previously approved in the House as part of a larger bill, but stalled in the Senate.

When first asked in an ABC/Post poll in 1993, 63 percent of Americans favored allowing service by homosexuals who don’t reveal their sexual orientation – the “don’t tell” policy; far fewer, 44 percent, supported service by gays who do reveal their sexual orientation.

Both views have changed, the latter most sharply. Today 83 percent favor allowing service by gays who don’t tell, up 20 points – and, as noted, almost as many also favor service by gays and lesbians who do disclose their sexual orientation, up 33 points from its 1993 level.

These numbers have been largely stable the last few years. The former, 83 percent, matches its high last February. And the 77 percent figure is a scant 2 points above its previous high in ABC/Post polls in 2008 and last winter alike.

Support for service by homosexuals even if they do disclose their sexuality is broadly based, albeit with differences among groups – 81 percent among women, 72 percent among men; 86 percent among Democrats, 74 percent among Republicans and independents alike; 87 and 85 percent, respectively, among liberals and moderates, 65 percent among conservatives. It’s lowest, but still 55 percent, among the 14 percent of Americans who describe themselves as “very” conservative.

While changes have been very large across the board, the biggest since 1993 are among Republicans, conservatives and Southerners, all with 42-point increases in support for allowing gays to serve openly; and men, up 37 points.

### Support for Gays and Lesbians in the Military

	If orientation is kept private			If orientation is made public		
	1993	2010	Change	1993	2010	Change
All	63	83	+20	44	77	+33
Men	56	79	+23	35	72	+37
Women	71	87	+16	52	81	+29
Democrats	69	89	+20	54	86	+32
Independents	63	82	+19	42	74	+32
Republicans	55	80	+25	32	74	+42
Liberals	71	85	+14	59	87	+28

Moderates	67	87	+20	50	85	+35
Conservatives	53	80	+27	23	65	+42
White	64	85	+21	42	78	+36
Non-White	64	77	+13	52	74	+22
HS or less	60	79	+19	41	75	+34
Some College	68	85	+17	48	78	+30
College Grad	67	87	+20	44	79	+35
Post Grad	71	88	+17	55	78	+23
East	71	83	+12	55	76	+21
Midwest	64	87	+23	44	78	+34
South	56	80	+24	34	76	+42
West	69	84	+15	49	78	+29

One note: Unlike previous ABC/Post polls on the subject, this one tested language by using the term “homosexual” in half the interviews, “gay and lesbian” in the other half. It made no meaningful difference in the results.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Dec. 9-12, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.5 points. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. This survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y, with sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

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Full results follow.

1-25, 28-37 held for release or previously released.

26. Changing topics, do you think [homosexuals/gays and lesbians] who do NOT publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
12/12/10	83	14	4
2/8/10*	83	15	1
7/13/08	78	18	5
1/15/01	75	22	3
5/23/93	63	35	2

\*2/10 and previous, “homosexuals”

27. Do you think [homosexuals/gays and lesbians] who DO publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?

Yes	No	No opinion
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12/12/10	77	21	2
2/8/10*	75	24	1
7/13/08	75	22	3
1/15/01	62	35	3
5/23/93	44	55	2

\*2/10 and previous, "homosexuals"

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