



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2009

The Honorable Ellen Tauscher  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2459 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Tauscher:

I am writing on behalf of the 150,000 members of the American Psychological Association (APA) to express our strong support for H.R. 1283, the *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009*.

APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. Comprised of researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students, APA works to advance psychology as a science, a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.

The *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009* lays a strong foundation for instituting a military policy of nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation in the U.S. military, consistent with anti-discrimination policies concerning race, gender, and disability status. In particular, this legislation would repeal the current "Policy concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces" (10 U.S.C. § 654, also referred to as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy), under which thousands of qualified gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons have been involuntarily discharged due to their sexual orientation.

APA has a longstanding commitment to promoting policies that protect lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals from discrimination. This stance is reflected in APA's policy statement on *Sexual Orientation and Military Service* (please see attached). In this policy statement, APA reaffirmed its commitment to disseminating scientific knowledge to remove the stigma of mental disorders associated with gay, lesbian, and bisexual behavior and orientations. At the same time, the policy statement articulates APA's support for initiatives that promote the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, and bisexual service members, as well as the military and American society as a whole.

A briefing sheet created by APA on this topic is also enclosed for your consideration. This document provides a comprehensive set of scientific references in support of eliminating the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.

APA believes that the enactment of H.R. 1283 will make an important contribution to the mental health and well-being of gay, lesbian, and bisexual military personnel, and to the effectiveness of the U.S. military in general.

In closing, we would like to thank you for your commitment to eliminating discrimination in military legislation, and offer our association’s assistance in furthering passage of this vital legislation during the 111th Congress. Please contact Jutta Tobias, Ph.D., of our Government Relations Office at (202) 336-5668 or [jtobias@apa.org](mailto:jtobias@apa.org), if you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Public Interest Directorate