

**Prepared Joint Statement of the Hon. Clifford Stanley,  
Hon. Jeh Charles Johnson  
and General Carter Ham  
Before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel  
“Review of the DOD Process for Assessing the Requirements to  
Implement Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell”**

March 3, 2010

Madame Chair and Congressman Wilson, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today.

As you know, on February 2, 2010, Secretary Gates announced the formation of a Department of Defense Working Group to assess the implications of a repeal of 10 U.S.C. § 654, should that occur, and develop an implementation plan for any new statutory mandate. The Comprehensive Review Working Group will identify the impacts to the force of a repeal of 10 U.S.C. § 654 in areas that include military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting/retention, and family readiness, and recommend actions that should be taken in light of such impacts.

The Working Group is at the outset of its endeavor, so we do not have a great deal of information to report at this stage.

However, yesterday we made available to Congress the Terms of Reference which provide the Secretary's guidance to us, as well as the methodology for the Working Group's assessment. As required by the Terms of Reference, we will deliver a written report of our assessment to the Secretary no later than December 1, 2010.

The Working Group has now been assembled, and consists of four substantive teams: (1) a Survey team; (2) a Legislative, Regulatory and Legal team; (3) a Policy Development team; and (4) an Education and Training team. Each team is co-led by civilian and military leaders within the Department of Defense, and we endeavored to pair co-leads from different services to ensure a cross-section of service participation. We are happy to provide greater detail about the intent of each team. (A separate working group is now actively considering revisions to the regulations implementing Don't Ask Don't Tell, as the Secretary directed, to consider

whether, within the confines of the existing law, the policy can be implemented in a fairer and more appropriate manner.)

Here are the key principles that we believe should guide the Working Group's assessment:

First, the Working Group is firmly committed to soliciting the views of a wide array of individuals from the different services, including, as the Secretary has directed, military families. Over the course of the next eight months members of the Working Group will meet with a wide array of individuals of all services, rank, age and assignment, officers and enlisted, to seek their advice, opinions and concerns regarding a repeal and how it should be implemented. Likewise, the Working Group will seek to hear from the many responsible voices of those individuals and groups with diverse views on this important matter.

Second, we will engage Members of Congress throughout this process.

Third, as Secretary Gates has also stated, the assessment will be conducted without disrupting the war efforts, and with minimal intrusion in forward-deployed areas.

Fourth, Mr. Johnson and General Ham, the two co-chairs, are asking all members of the Working Group to be neutral and objective in conducting this assessment. We are mindful that this is an emotional subject, the topic of intense debate, and that almost everyone familiar with the issue has an opinion about it. Mr. Johnson and General Ham are committed to leading this Working Group in an objective and thorough manner, and will provide the Secretary with their best assessment of the impact of repeal, regardless of what that may be, to permit the Secretary to determine, as he said in his testimony, how best to prepare for implementation of a Congressional repeal.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today and we look forward to your questions.