

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
Extension of Remarks
September 21, 2011

Statement on the End of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Policy”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to mark the end of the discriminatory Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy, and to celebrate that qualified men and women who have the desire to serve their country can no longer be denied simply because of sexual orientation.

Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell limited the ability of our armed forces to recruit and retain talented Americans. Hundreds of men and women with critical abilities, including language skills, have been discharged under this policy.

Meanwhile, many of our closest allies have demonstrated that allowing open service does not harm unit cohesion or military performance.

Most importantly, Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell institutionalized discrimination in our military. It was a policy that forced men and women to lie about their identity in order to serve their country.

As of this week, no one is prohibited from serving the country they love because of whom they love.