

NOT the way to look at this current conflict. Like Vietnam, we can do a solid job at the Tactical Level and lose the war at the Operational and Strategic Levels. This is where we find ourselves today in Afghanistan . . . and the path to any kind of victory is closely linked to success in Pakistan and India. The possibility of achieving such success across all three countries is small . . . certainly following the policies in place today (and yesterday.)

Again, I applaud your work and on behalf of those young men and women who are sacrificing so far from home, I thank you.

Semper Fidelis.

CHARLES C. KRULAK,
General, USMC (Ret.).

ON THE OCCASION OF THE END OF "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy officially ended.

Yesterday, J.D. Smith, a 25 year-old Air Force officer and gay rights advocate could drop his pseudonym and come out as who he is—1st Lieutenant Josh Seefried.

Yesterday, Maj. Darrel Choat, a gay Marine officer wrote in The Washington Post: "I am a patriotic American. I am an officer who loves country and Corps. I am doing my best to serve honorably and proudly. And I happen to be gay."

Yesterday, a policy that since 1993 has led to over 14,000 servicemembers being fired simply for being open about their sexual orientation officially ended, allowing Major Choat, 1st Lt. Seefried and thousands of other servicemembers to continue their service in the U.S. military without having to hide who they are.

Policies like "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", which created an atmosphere of fear and mistrust among colleagues serving side-by-side, have no place in the military.

I applaud the official end of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the significance of its repeal in ensuring equality in our military and in securing rights for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community.

WHEN WILL MARINE LEADERSHIP STAND UP FOR GAY SERVICE MEMBERS?

(By Darrel Choat)

If President Obama could have ended "don't ask, don't tell" by announcing a policy change, rather than his intent to work with Congress to repeal the law, in his 2010 State of the Union address, I might have served in the Marines openly but quietly. But the repeal debate turned ugly, and as gay veterans and gay soldiers and Marines serving in Iraq and Afghanistan were disrespected by military and civilian leaders, I realized that a quiet transition was not an honorable course of action.

Remarks by senior Marine leaders made clear that their conception of "Marine" did not include those who were gay. During and following his confirmation hearings in fall 2010, Commandant Gen. James F. Amos said that he did not want his Marines dying because of a "distraction." He probably meant that managing the repeal would be a distraction, but many gay Marines, myself included, felt that Amos was saying that we

were the distraction that would get our fellow Marines killed. Given the number of gay Marines in combat, this comment was deeply hurtful.

I am a patriotic American. I am an officer who loves country and Corps. I am doing my best to serve honorably and proudly. And I happen to be gay.

My challenge is not to simply acknowledge my sexuality as a Marine officer but for my actions to reflect the legacy of the Declaration of Independence—that all Americans are created equal and deserve equal consideration from their government. My task is to demand no less from my country and Corps. I understand that my statements will prompt anger and disgust among some active-duty and retired Marines. History demonstrates, however, that deliberate steps are necessary to overcome the legacy of dishonor and prejudice such as that inspired by "don't ask, don't tell." I have confidence that my Corps will take those steps.

While working in the Senate in the 1990s, I remember Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) talking to the floor and disparaging the "agenda" of gays and their "sinful" and "deviant" behavior. I felt helpless. One day Helms stepped into an elevator in which I alone was riding. Slowly, I realized no words could be adequate to confront him. His hate and ignorance could not be rationally discussed. The only effective course, it seemed to me, would be to disprove him by example, by personifying a proud, honorable and gay American who—simply by existing—refuted Helms's demagoguery.

I came out to my family years earlier, and I had long been in the habit of letting co-workers become aware of my sexual orientation. Often I made no pronouncements. Engaging in honest discussions about weekend activities or personal relationships was all that was necessary. My guiding principle was simple: If I felt I had to say something or compromise out of fear or shame because I was gay, I had to stop and take the honest course. If I got fired, I got fired. No job was worth the sacrifice of my honor and courage.

In 1981, I had been awarded a four-year Marine Corps Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship. I was aware that I was different—I hated being different—and I was self-conscious. I found it difficult to interact with other midshipmen and Marines, so I left the program. In 1997, however, I knew that "don't ask, don't tell" did not preclude my service; it simply required that I shut up about being gay. So I applied and was accepted to attend Officer Candidate School in Quantico in October 1997. I greatly underestimated the personal cost of this compromise.

After the Battle of Saipan in 1944, Marine Commandant Gen. Alexander Vandegrift said, "The Negro Marines are no longer on trial. They are Marines, period." His predecessor, Gen. Thomas Holcomb, had said that "Negroes did not have the right to demand a place in the corps" and that "If it were a question of having a Marine Corps of 5,000 whites or 250,000 Negroes, I would rather have the whites." It took leadership for Vandegrift to recognize the heroic service of African American Marines and end officially sanctioned segregation in the Corps.

While Sgt. Maj. Micheal Barrett, the service's senior enlisted official, clearly stated in June that a Marine is a Marine, regardless of sexual orientation, I am aware of no senior Marine officer who has followed Vandegrift's lead and set a leadership tone that will turn the page on the prejudice of the past. A January video by Amos and Barrett's predecessor, Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, sent the message simply that the don't-ask law has changed and that Marines follow the law. Action to overcome the legacy of "don't ask, don't tell" is still necessary.

Vandegrift is an example of the possible. With the formal repeal today of "don't ask, don't tell," it is time for the Marine Corps to end the bigotry and prejudice regarding sexual orientation and to give Marines, combat veterans and Purple Heart recipients the respect and consideration they have earned. Marine Maj. Darrel Choat, a student at the Marine Corps University in Quantico, is the author of a report and personal essay in "The End of Don't Ask, Don't Tell," a forthcoming book from Marine Corps University Press. The views expressed here are his own.

IN HONOR OF THE BUCKS COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th anniversary of the Bucks County Conservation District. Their mission is to provide for the wise use, management, and development of Bucks County's soil, water, and other important natural resources.

Through a comprehensive approach which includes traditional advocacy as well as educational efforts such as school-based programs to present lessons to students on soil and water conservation, and watershed education for teachers to educate them on the importance of protecting our watersheds, Bucks County Conservation District is leading the conservation efforts in my district.

Local solutions that originate in groups like the Bucks County Conservation District are often the best solutions, and I congratulate them on celebrating 50 years of success and I wish them the best of luck as they work to preserve vital soil and water resources for generations to come.

IN HONOR OF MAYOR STEVE BACH

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the new mayor of Colorado Springs, Steve Bach. Situated at the heart of my district, Colorado Springs is an exceptional community that deserves an exceptional leader. Mayor Bach is that man.

In 2010, Colorado Springs voters adopted a strong mayor-council form of government. As the city's first mayor under this new model, Steve will lead Colorado Springs through this historic transition. For the first time in the city's 140-year history, the Mayor will have broad powers over hiring and firing city workers.

Mayor Bach has a unique opportunity to shape the city's direction for years to come. Mayor Bach has lived in Colorado Springs for over 40 years and has seen the city change from a small town nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains to the 41st largest metro area in the country.

Mayor Bach previously was a commercial real estate broker who retains longstanding ties to the business community. He promises to improve the business climate by cutting red tape at City Hall. His fresh ideas on job creation and his history of building coalitions in

the community will no doubt bring new vigor to the area's economy.

As a devoted husband and family man, Mayor Bach knows the kind of values and ideals that are required to lead in a responsible and conservative manner. I wish the Mayor success in his new job. I know that Colorado Springs could not ask for a better mayor at this critical time.

RECOGNITION OF ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN'S FORTY-THREE YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Admiral Mike Mullen who is retiring as the 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff after more than 43 years of distinguished service to his country.

A proud graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy's Class of 1968, his rise in the Navy started at sea, when Ensign Mullen deployed to the western Pacific and participated in combat operations off the coast of Vietnam aboard USS *Collett*. Over the course of his career at sea he subsequently served on six other warships, including command of three of those vessels. Admiral Mullen also commanded the *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group and U.S. Second Fleet.

In July of 2005, Admiral Mullen was sworn in as the 28th Chief of Naval Operations, serving as the top uniformed leader and representative to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. During his tenure, he oversaw the service's efforts to man, train, and equip our Navy to fulfill its traditional missions at sea. Additionally, he conceived and championed the Navy's contributions to the fight on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other nations in support of our country's effort to combat violent extremism.

After successfully completing his tour as Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mullen assumed duties as the 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 1, 2007. Since assuming duties as Chairman, he has, in concert with our Nation's leadership, overseen multiple, sustained joint military operations that disrupted terrorist networks, provided humanitarian assistance at home and abroad, and improved the security and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan.

While continuing to lead our men and women in uniform around the world, Admiral Mullen has been the catalyst for a nationwide dialogue to advance awareness and support for our warriors, veterans, and their families. I have no doubt his commitment to these Americans who have given so much will indeed be enduring, lasting far beyond his days in uniform.

Please join me in recognizing and commending Admiral Mike Mullen for a lifetime of service to his country and to wish him the best in his retirement. May God bless Mike and Deborah, and their family, for all they have given and continue to give our country. The United States Navy and our military will dearly miss one of its most respected and valued leaders.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MASTER SERGEANT RICHARD FRANCIS MURPHY

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of Master Sergeant, Richard Francis Murphy.

Richard was born in Providence Rhode Island on May 10, 1917. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps at the age of 19 and continued to show his dedication to our country for years to come. He served in both World War II and the Korean War before retiring as a Master Sergeant.

After his retirement from the Air Force, Richard went to work for the Electric and Water Department for the City of Santa Clara. He volunteered in his community, serving on many civic and veterans organizations including the United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County and the Air Force Sergeants Association. Richard was easily recognizable in San Jose, as he helped organize our Veterans Day parade and the Memorial Day ceremony at Oak Hill Cemetery.

On August 21st of this year, Richard passed away in his home in San Jose at the age of 94. Richard and his wife Kay had been married for 69 years. In that time they saw the birth of five children, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Richard was not only a dear friend of mine, but he was a friend to the entire veteran community in San Jose. He was proud of his service and grateful to others who served. I wish to honor the life of this American hero and memorialize our gratefulness for his dedication to his community and country.

IN RECOGNITION OF HELEN BRADLEY

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Helen Bradley, this year's recipient of the Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities Award from Humanities Texas.

After graduating from the University of Dallas, Ms. Bradley joined the Social Studies Department at Nimitz High School in Irving, Texas. Her belief in and commitment to the concept of opportunity is evident in her approach to her U.S. history and government classes. By helping students recognize America's unique opportunities for all and elevating the material with visits to the Dallas Holocaust Museum and the Sixth Floor Museum, Ms. Bradley creates a distinct, positive, and enjoyable learning experience for her students. She exhibits great leadership by coordinating with teachers from other departments and different grade levels to enhance the material and ensure her students are informed, knowledgeable, and proud of our Nation's rich history.

Her lessons extend beyond the classroom. For over twenty years, Ms. Bradley devoted

the third Friday of every month to community service, volunteering alongside a group of her students and Nimitz alumni. What she teaches her students is not merely U.S. history; it encompasses life lessons and the values of opportunity and service. Ms. Bradley exemplifies the important role of educators play in shaping our youth and preparing them to be the next generation of great leaders.

This prestigious award recognizes her outstanding contributions in teaching and service to the humanities. It is my great pleasure and privilege to honor Ms. Bradley for her passion for teaching, commitment to service, and belief in the importance of education and opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Bradley.

HONORING LONG-SERVING MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS IN WESTERN NEW YORK

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, in today's time of challenging budgets and fiscal uncertainty, at a time when the long term success of the United States Postal Service hangs in the balance, it is altogether fitting and proper that we recognize the dedicated public servants who have populated the rank and file membership of the Postal Service in Western New York.

The role of a letter carrier remains among the most fundamental in American society. It remains an amazing feat that a letter dropped into a mailbox in Buffalo, New York will shortly arrive at its destination, be it across town or across the country. Letter carriers face a wide array of complications, obstacles, hazards and other challenges as they complete their daily routes. Citizens across the United States open their mailboxes and routinely retrieve their mail, seldom stopping to reflect upon the work performed by letter carriers each day.

Beyond their professional responsibilities, Letter Carriers are integral members of our community as well. While Letter Carriers participate in dozens of charitable events throughout the year, they are particularly effective in the annual "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive, where millions of pounds of nonperishable food items are delivered to community food banks throughout the United States. I'm proud to add that the Buffalo region was the first to undertake this effort, and our region routinely leads the nation in tons of food collected for this annual event.

On Saturday, September 24th, Branch 3 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, representing Buffalo and Western New York, will hold its annual "Old Timers' Night." This event will pay tribute to the careers of eleven letter carriers, each having more than 50 years of service.

Scheduled to be honored are the following members with 55 years of service: Chester Gawel, Richard Miller, Albert Schattner, Chester Stuben, and John Zelli.

Those with 50 years of service who are to be honored include: Richard Bailoni, Edward Dudkowski, Robert Hibbard, Salvatore Iannello, Joseph Sikorski, and John Tutaro.