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House Armed Services Committee

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
BEFORE
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS FOR REPEAL OF LAW
AND POLICIES GOVERNING SERVICE BY OPENLY GAY AND LESBIAN
SERVICE MEMBERS

April 7, 2011

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The law signed by the President on December 22, 2010 established the conditions for the eventual repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. The Marine Corps is working hard to meet the corresponding requirements, as are all the uniformed services. Once they are met, the required certification may be provided by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense and the President to the Congressional committees. That certification will let Congress know that the conditions for repeal have been met by all the services.

Overall, Marine leaders at all levels are working faithfully in ensuring compliance with the spirit and intent of the new law. As such, the Marine Corps has taken the following significant actions in line with the direction of our civilian leaders.

After the House of Representatives and the Senate voted to repeal Title 10, US Code 654 in December 2010, I published the following to the entire Marine Corps, "As Marines, we abide by the laws of our nation, and will implement the new policy in accordance with specific directions and implementing guidance from our chain of command...Fidelity is the essence of who we are. Accordingly, we will faithfully execute this new law, and will continue to treat each other with dignity and respect."

While in Afghanistan over Christmas, Sergeant Major Kent and I spoke to more than 12,000 Marines and Sailors about the pending repeal and my expectations for successful implementation. Shortly after returning from Afghanistan, Sergeant Major Kent and I made a video for all Marines and their families to reinforce our message and to reach out to Marines in locations we could not personally visit.

The Marine Corps has closely followed the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review Working Group in developing and executing our implementation training. Some of the

very first Marines to receive this training were all of our three and four-star senior leaders in late January. On 7 February, the Marine Corps as a whole began its Corps-wide training.

Your Marines throughout the world are dutifully conducting this training. The Marine Corps is projected to complete all expert/special staff and leader training (Tier I and Tier II) by the end of March. As of today (March 29), our Tier III training is 32% complete. All training should be fully complete by 1 June; internet training may be used when absolutely necessary, but the majority of the training will be ‘eyeball-to-eyeball.’

Successful implementation of this policy depends on leadership, professionalism, discipline and respect. Leaders at all levels of our Corps are setting the example and are fully committed to the sustainment of unit effectiveness, readiness and cohesion. In our profession of arms, adherence to standards of conduct is essential. Each service member must be treated with respect and dignity. Leadership is key to creating and sustaining an environment where the opportunity to contribute, achieve and advance is available to all.

Before making a final recommendation to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense and the President regarding certification, I will use both objective and subjective measures to gauge the effectiveness of our training and our readiness to implement this new policy. Prior to recommending certification, the Marine Corps will have completed 100% of special staff and leader training and ~ 90% of our remaining Marines’ training for both active and reserve components. While useful, objective measures alone are not sufficient to recommend certification. The Marine Corps will also use subjective tools to include Command Climate Surveys, Enlisted Retention Surveys and Inspector General Reports to measure training success. Additionally, I will rely heavily on feedback from Commanders throughout the Marine

Corps. Prior to recommending certification, I will confirm that all the conditions for certification have been met.

Your Marines will continue to faithfully abide by the laws of this nation and will conduct themselves in accordance with the intent of the new policy. While leadership is the ultimate key to successful implementation of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell repeal, our core values of honor, courage and commitment will guide us throughout training and implementation.