



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 28, 2010

CONTACT: Indra Lusero, Assistant Director, 303-902-9402, indralusero@palmcenter.ucsb.edu

**PALM CENTER RELEASES STATEMENT DETAILING FAILURES OF GAY BAN
Dr. Nathaniel Frank Calls “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” a “Colossal Failure”**

SANTA BARBARA, CA, January 28, 2010 - Today the Palm Center released the following statement by Senior Research Fellow, Dr. Nathaniel Frank, after several lawmakers suggested the military’s current ban on openly gay service is a “successful” policy that is “working well.” Those comments came in response to the announcement by President Obama in last night’s State of the Union address that he intends to work with Congress this year to end the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. The statement is as follows:

It is important to pause any time someone says that discrimination is “working well” as policy. Senator McCain and Representative Boehner think discrimination is working well in the military. And if discrimination is their goal, they have a point. But this hardly means “don’t ask, don’t tell” is a success. My twelve years of research on this policy show it’s a colossal failure that’s had the opposite of its intended effect. “Don’t ask, don’t tell” was supposed to make sexual orientation a non-issue so gays could serve discreetly while protecting privacy and cohesion, and sparing our military the unaffordable loss of essential talent. Instead, it has:

- wasted thousands of essential personnel, including Arabic speakers, and filled those slots with ex-convicts and drug abusers
- struck at the heart of unit cohesion by breaking apart cohesive fighting teams, and undermining trust, integrity, and honesty among soldiers
- hamstrung tens of thousands of gay, lesbian, and bisexual soldiers from doing their jobs by limiting their access to support services that are essential to morale and readiness
- invaded the privacy of all service members by casting a cloud of suspicion and uncertainty over the intimate lives of everyone in the armed forces
- cost the American taxpayer hundreds of millions of dollars

In this climate, it’s no wonder that rumor and innuendo have led to witch hunts that have meant yanking gay soldiers from their units, even when they have followed the law and policy. The military itself knows the policy doesn’t work, as evidenced by the declining discharge figures now that America is at war—clearly commanders on the ground are ignoring a policy which is not serving them well. The idea that “don’t ask, don’t tell” is a success reflects a profound detachment from the reality on the ground. By every possible measure, it’s been a costly failure.



###

The Palm Center is a think tank at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Since 1998, the Center has been a leader in commissioning and disseminating research in the areas of gender, sexuality, and the military. For more information visit www.palmcenter.ucsb.edu.