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VAST MAJORITY OF OFFICERS OPPOSE ALLOWING GAYS TO SERVE OPENLY
New Poll Finds Only 22% Support

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SANTA BARBARA, CA, January 14, 2008 - According to a new poll, only 22 percent of U.S. military officers believe that gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly as a fix for recent recruiting shortfalls. The poll, conducted by the Center for a New American Security and by the journal Foreign Policy, was administered in December, 2007 and January, 2008 to 3,437 active duty and retired officers at or above the rank of major or lieutenant commander.

According to Dr. Aaron Belkin, director of the Palm Center, "these new data are consistent with other surveys which show that among the officer corps, there is little support for repeal of 'don't ask, don't tell.'" The Palm Center is a research institute at the University of California, Santa Barbara that has conducted extensive studies on gays and lesbians in the military.

The new poll included a question, "Which of the following steps do you support to increase recruiting numbers in the U.S. military (choose all that apply)." Fifty-eight percent said that the military should "allow a larger percentage of those who have GED but not a high school diploma" and 38 percent said that the draft should be reinstated. Only 7 percent said that the "use of criminal, health, and other 'waivers' for service" should be used. Respondants were not given a "don't know," "maybe" or "unsure" option.

A more complete analysis of recent polling data of military attitudes towards gays and lesbians may be found in the new study "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell': Does the Gay Ban Undermine the Military's Reputation?" which was published in the latest issue of the journal Armed Forces and Society.

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The Palm Center is a research institute at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The Center uses rigorous social science to inform public discussions of controversial social issues, enabling policy outcomes to be informed more by evidence than by emotion. Its data-driven approach is premised on the notion that the public makes wise choices on social issues when high-quality information is available. For more information, visit www.palmcenter.ucsb.edu