



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

PALM CENTER COMMENTS ON WASHINGTON POST CRITIQUE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER PROPOSAL

Statement by Palm Center Director Aaron Belkin

Date: June 28, 2009

SANTA BARBARA, CA, June 28, 2009 -- The Washington Post raised some important points in yesterday's editorial critiquing the Palm Center's proposal for an executive order suspending gay discharges from the military. According to the Post, gay activists should advocate a bolder strategy, in particular legislative repeal of "don't ask, don't tell."

While the community's ultimate goal is full legislative repeal, the Post overlooks that every discharge of a mission-critical specialist like Dan Choi undermines national security. Choi, an Arabic translator, probably will be fired after his discharge hearing this Tuesday.

As well, the Post frames the choice between an executive order and legislative repeal as mutually exclusive. As the Center for American Progress (CAP) recommends in its new report, however, a two-pronged approach is needed, starting with an immediate executive order followed by legislative repeal at a later date.

CAP, Human Rights Campaign, and the seventy-seven members of Congress who called for immediate executive action last week seem to agree that repeal legislation is not on a fast track. In the meantime, while Congress, the White House and the Pentagon figure out what to do, the ban continues to undermine national security every time a mission-critical specialist is fired.

###

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.