



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

**PALM CENTER DATA CITED AS RATIONALE TO EXCLUDE GAYS
Editorial Refers to Service Members' Religious Beliefs**

SANTA BARBARA, CA, August 15, 2007 - An op-ed published in today's Washington Times cites a recent Zogby poll as evidence of why gays should not be allowed to serve openly in the military.

Maj. Daniel L. Davis, a cavalry officer who served in Afghanistan in 2005, cites a Zogby finding that 39 percent of active duty personnel oppose allowing gays to serve openly. Davis notes that, "many of those religious persons who serve in the military are convinced that the homosexual lifestyle is immoral, and...their views on the subject are as valid as anyone's."

The Zogby Interactive poll of 545 troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan was designed in conjunction with the Palm Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and conducted by Zogby Oct. 24-26, 2006.

According to Aaron Belkin, Director of the Palm Center, "It is certainly true that many service members do not want gays and lesbians to serve openly. But the question as laid out by the Joint Chiefs of Staff is whether integration would promote or harm military readiness and unit cohesion. And on those points, the evidence is clear."

Belkin added that two-thirds of British service members told pollsters that they would not work with gays, but that when the UK lifted its ban, readiness and unit cohesion did not decline. In the U.S., 5 percent of troops are "very uncomfortable" interacting with gays.

###

The Michael D. Palm Center, formerly the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, 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.org.