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CONSERVATIVE BOB BARR CALLS ON GOP TO OPPOSE "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"

Wall St. Journal Op-Ed Says Gay Ban Violates Conservative Values

SANTA BARBARA, CA, June 13 2007 - Former Republican Congressman Bob Barr has published an op-ed in today's Wall St. Journal calling for the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," the policy which prohibits gay men and lesbians from serving openly in the military. Barr, who was a member of Congress from 1995 to 2003, opposes same-sex marriage as well as efforts to classify gays and lesbians as members of a constitutionally protected minority class.

On the gays-in-the-military issue, however, Barr's feels differently. In the Wall St. Journal op-ed, he argued that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military would be consistent with conservative values such as saving money, promoting national security, and preserving individual privacy. He suggested that Republican presidential candidates who opposed the repeal of the policy during last week's debate "showed a disturbing move away from conservative principles, in favor of what smells strongly of political expediency or timidity."

According to Dr. Aaron Belkin, Director of the Michael D. Palm Center, a research institute at the University of California, "Many Republicans agree with Barr's argument, but few party leaders have been willing to say so in public." Gallup has reported that a majority of Republicans support allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military. Barr told Palm Center researchers that his support reflects a growing body of evidence which shows that the ban is detrimental to military effectiveness.

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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.