

Joe Sanchez

For City of Miami Mayor 2009

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CHAIRMAN JOE SANCHEZ VOICES STRONG SUPPORT FOR NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY IN U.S. ARMED FORCES

(Miami, FL)- City Commission Chairman Joe Sanchez introduced a resolution -- passed unanimously at today's City Commission meeting urging President Barack Obama and the United States Congress to adopt the Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009, which eliminates the "don't ask, don't tell" policy and adopts a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation within the U.S. armed forces.

"Picture a person with the skills, expertise and bravery to protect an entire platoon of soldiers in the battlefield. The current rules prevent that would-be hero from sacrificing it all to protect our Democracy -- simply because his or her sexual orientation," Sanchez said. "We must change the rules, so all of our best and brightest can serve our military."

Sanchez noted that many of America's allies, including Israel, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, allow lesbian, gay, and bisexual servicemembers to serve openly in their militaries, and the United Kingdom now actively recruit these servicemembers.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network finds that American taxpayers spend nearly \$26 million a year training replacements for servicemembers discharged under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, with unknown costs associated with the actual discharge of these servicemembers and non-monetary costs to troop cohesion and morale associated with the loss of unit members.

"This sends a message that the City of Miami knows the time is now for all Americans to be able to serve their country proudly in the United States armed forces," Sanchez said.

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