

U.S. Congressman Mike Pence delivered the following remarks on the House floor today in opposition to an amendment that would repeal the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy.

Transcript:

**Mr. PENCE.** I rise in opposition to the Murphy amendment.

Let me say I do so because I believe the American people don't want to see the American military used to advance a liberal political agenda, especially when the men and women who serve in the military haven't had a say in the matter, and they have been promised to have a say. We've received correspondence from leading voices in the American military who have suggested, were the Congress today to enact this legislation, it would break faith with our men and women in uniform.

Now, let me concede to the point. I was raised by a combat veteran. I did not wear the uniform of the United States, but I have strong objections to repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell. I believe that that compromise of 17 years ago has been a successful compromise. It has preserved unit cohesion. It has preserved morale. It has enabled us to go forward with readiness and recruitment without interruption. It, of course, itself, was a compromise that represented an historic change from the policy of the American myth.

Yet what is being advanced here today in repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell would represent a fundamental change in the nature and in the culture of our military. It ought to be carefully and thoroughly explored among the men and women who are doing the work in uniform, and it is being explored today.

The Department of Defense has commissioned, as we all know here, a confidential survey of some 350,000 servicemen and their families--100,000 active duty, 70,000 duty spouses, 100,000 reserve component military, 80,000 reserve component spouses--to determine their input on the effects and concerns if Don't Ask, Don't Tell is repealed. Yet here we are in Congress, even though this survey will not be completed until August and the report, itself, will not be delivered to Congress until December, and we are hurrying along what is, for all intents and purposes, the legislation that will enable the full repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

I urge my colleagues in Congress to take a breath, to stop, particularly here, as we stand just a few days before that day in which we, all of us, Republicans and Democrats, will set aside all

politics, and we will remember those who did not come home. Why can't we today also show respect for the men and women who wear the uniform today and listen to what they have to say?

I urge my colleagues to oppose the Murphy amendment.

Let me say again: The American people don't want the American military used as a vehicle to advance a liberal political agenda, especially when the men and women who serve in our military haven't had a say in the matter. That is what this Congress is poised to do today. Make no mistake about it.

I urge my colleagues, regardless of what one thinks about social issues and social values, to respect our military. Let's respect men and women in uniform. Let's hear them out before we introduce such an enormous change in the culture and in the practice of the American military, one that would be represented by the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.