

1 **OVERTURE 22** from Savannah River Presbytery

(to MNA, OC)

2 “Retain Don’t-Ask-Don’t-Tell Policy in Military”
3

4 **Whereas**, believing that the Word of God requires ministers, and other church officers, to
5 proclaim the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), and that it is a grave dereliction of
6 duty to proclaim "Peace, peace" when there is no (actual) peace, or to refuse to
7 confront those who "call evil good, and good evil, who substitute darkness for light,
8 or light for darkness" (Isaiah 5:20); and
9

10 **Whereas**, believing it is the duty of the civil magistrate, "as nursing fathers, to protect the
11 church of our Common Lord . . . in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons
12 whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part
13 of their sacred function, without violence or danger . . . and as Jesus Christ hath
14 appointed a regular government and discipline in His church, no law of any
15 commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof;" and
16

17 **Whereas**, believing (in light of over a century of our collective military experience) that any
18 removal, or diminishing of, the well established U.S. military policy, and high moral
19 purpose, of excluding open homosexuals from military service will, most certainly,
20 put all chaplains who believe the Bible to be God's Holy Word in its entirety gravely
21 at risk of unconstitutional pressure, and eventual persecution, for upholding the
22 Scriptural truth that homosexual thinking and behavior is sinful, should be so named,
23 and ought to be corporately resisted; and
24

25 **Whereas**, believing that any governmental decision to permit acceptance and inclusion of
26 homosexuals serving openly in our military services, will most grievously, "interfere
27 in matters of faith", particularly the exercise of Christian ministry on the part of our
28 PRJCCMP endorsed chaplains; and
29

30 **Whereas**, it is apparent from the action of the 2009 PCA and OPC General Assemblies that
31 a number of teaching and ruling elders do not consider such a situation to constitute a
32 circumstance extraordinary enough to warrant General Assembly action. (This in
33 part may be because of the failure to appreciate the difference between a “free
34 civilian society” and a “hierarchical military society.”) To the contrary the
35 PRJCCMP believes that silence by the church on this issue endangers the evangelical
36 chaplaincy in the Armed Services, particularly the continuance of a faithful gospel
37 ministry by almost two hundred PRJCCMP endorsed pastors (chaplains). And
38

39 **Whereas**, it is our belief that this is an extraordinary case is demonstrated by the following
40 examples among others. We believe that these are predictable and potential results
41 when/or if DADT is repealed by Congress, based on statements from lobbying
42 groups supporting the removal of this ban, and similar judicial rulings and/or
43 legislative actions already enacted or proposed within our country:

1
2 Unit chaplains will be expected in their preaching, teaching, and counsel to support
3 the federal military policy of non-discrimination and may be subject to equal rights
4 complaints and/or charges if there is any spoken disapproval of homosexual practice
5 and relationships. By way of contrast, while fornication and adultery are both great
6 evils, neither is a politically protected behavior.

7
8 Chaplains who frequently hold command sponsored marriage retreats to strengthen
9 traditional marriages may be required to include homosexual couples to avoid equal
10 rights complaints or charges.

11
12 Chaplains may be required to facilitate sensitivity training classes for military
13 personnel to foster acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle within the ranks.

14
15 Chaplains may be asked to marry, baptize, administer communion, and provide other
16 spiritual services to practicing homosexuals (who may profess to be Christians)
17 which are reserved by Scripture for repentant and obedient believers. Again equal
18 civil rights discrimination and not the free exercise of religion will be the complaint.

19
20 Chaplains may be expected to support excising all anti-homosexual passages from
21 any Bibles permitted in military chapels until a "homosexual friendly bible" is printed,
22 which may become the required version for chapel worship and for distribution to
23 military personnel. Current gifts of Bibles for service member distribution by civilian
24 organizations would be ended as well.

25
26 A serious dissonance between scriptural truth and immoral law supporting sinful
27 behavior will be generated within the ranks jeopardizing unit cohesion so critical in
28 combat. Again, equal rights and the elimination of alleged "hate speech" will trump
29 the vital blessing of good order and discipline as well as religious freedom.

30
31 In summation, on the basis of already observed pressures against PRJCCMP endorsed
32 chaplains, we believe that the proposed elimination of the DADT policy will become
33 catastrophic in the emerging unbiblical measures which it will bring to bear against all
34 chaplains. Chaplains may be required to refrain from any identification of any aspect of
35 homosexuality as sinful.

36
37 Therefore, we believe, in light of the above, that it is our biblical duty to recognize the
38 extraordinary danger descending upon the visible church from this "extraordinary case", by
39 humbly and urgently petitioning (with biblical grounds) the involved "civil magistrates" to
40 refrain from repealing the current DADT policy. (Note: Quotations, unless otherwise
41 indicated, are from Chapters XXIII and XXXI of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*)

42
43 **Now, therefore, be it resolved** that the Savannah River Presbytery respectfully overtures
44 the 38th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to adopt and
45 authorize the Moderator to have the attached letter communicated through proper
46

1 means to The Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the
2 Service Chiefs and the President of the United States in his capacity as Commander
3 in Chief, to maintain the existing policy of “Don’t Ask-Don’t Tell” (DADT), and
4 faithfully to resist its removal, for the protection and meaningful continuance of the
5 free exercise of religion within the Armed Forces of the United States.

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7 *Adopted by unanimous vote of Savannah River Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 20, 2010*
8 *Attested by /s/ RE William L Hatcher, stated clerk*

9
10 (See Attached Sample Letter)

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13 **Attachment**
14 **PETITION LETTER TO MILITARY/CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES**

15
16 (Letterhead Stationary)

17
18 DATE:
19 TO: General or Honorable XXXXX
20 FROM: The (Name of Denomination)
21 SUBJECT: Potential removal of the Military “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) Policy

22
23
24 1. Concern: The (member denomination) is gravely concerned over the potential removal of
25 the current DADT policy that has essentially in principle, though not specifically named as
26 such, governed the service of homosexual individuals in our military for much of its history.
27 The removal of this current ban may go so far as to force the resignation of our currently
28 serving chaplains from the military as well as the service of military members from this
29 denomination.

30
31 2. Consequences: The removal of the ban opens up the very real potential of the following
32 ramifications of repealing DADT:

33
34 Chaplains may be vulnerable to the charge of discrimination or command reprimand
35 if they preach, teach, or counsel in accordance with the passages in the Bible which
36 directly speak of the sin of homosexual practice.

37
38 Bibles in military chapels and on military bases will be under the threat of excision
39 of all passages which speak very directly to the sin of homosexual practice. Whether
40 it will be under the guise of “hate speech” or speech contrary to the policy of the
41 Department of Defense, the effort may be made soon after the removal of the ban.

42
43 Marriage retreats conducted by chaplains intended to strengthen traditional marriage
44 may have to include homosexual couples which may violate chaplains’ faith tenets
45 and negatively impact the voluntary participation of married heterosexual couples.

1 Homosexual couples may seek union ceremonies or marriages, which are in
2 violation of the beliefs and ordination vows of a large percentage of military
3 chaplains, not just those from this denomination. Refusal will invite the charge of
4 discrimination and command reprimand.
5

6 The “free exercise” and free speech rights of chaplains and military members may be
7 abrogated as Equal Opportunity policies, “hate speech” laws, or other legalities
8 trump the First Amendment.
9

10 These potentialities are real examples of or similar to what is already proposed in
11 statements by lobbying groups supporting the repeal.
12

13 3. Appeal: For the above and many other reasons affecting chaplains and military members
14 in the ranks we humbly appeal to you to not repeal DADT. We plead this for the good of the
15 nation, for the good of the chaplains who serve the nation on behalf of their church, for the
16 good of the military members from this church who serve in our armed services, and for the
17 protection of the constitutional principle of the free exercise of religion.
18

19 Sincerely,

20
21 Clerk, (Member Denomination)
22

23 Encl: General Assembly Resolution passed on June XX , 2010