



## Obama Advisor Valerie Jarrett applauds DADT repeal, gay military kisses

By Carlos Santoscoy

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WASHINGTON, DC -- Valerie Jarrett, senior adviser to President Barack Obama, on Saturday applauded repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

The policy, which for nearly 2 decades banned gay and bisexual troops from serving openly, ended last September.

Speaking to the over 1,000 people attending the first Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) national dinner since the policy's repeal, Jarrett thanked the group for its persistence in reversing the policy.

"So thank you for your steadfast determination, persistence and conviction that we could right a wrong," Jarrett said in her keynote speech to the group. "There were moments when it seemed foolish to hope. The times when 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' seemed more firmly entrenched than ever. Through it all, you never wavered from the ultimate goal. You believed that one day, if you worked for it, and fought for it, and sacrificed for it, then change would come."

Repeal, Jarrett said, made America stronger.

"Our national security has not been threatened by the repeal. On the contrary, it's been strengthened because gay and lesbian members of our military are now recognized as full members of the team. And despite what some opponents of repeal might have predicted, we have heard very few stories about resistance from within the military. Our military men and women are focused on their jobs, their missions. We got repeal done, we got it done the right way, and our country is stronger and better because we did."

She also cheered the recent military homecomings of openly gay troops, which include Marine Sargent Brandon Morgan and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Marissa Gaeta.

"I'm sure that all of you have seen some of the recent pictures of gay and lesbian servicemembers sharing an embrace, or first kiss with a loved one, when they return home from duty – just like any other family. It's a reminder that the men and women of our armed forces have handled repeal with the professionalism and class that we have come to expect from the finest fighting force in the world."

**Editor's Note:** Valerie Jarrett, a Chicago lawyer, businesswoman and one of President Obama's longest serving advisors, spoke at the [Equality Illinois](#) gala on Feb. 11, 2012. ([Full Story](#))