



Alexi Giannoulias calls for immediate repeal of DADT

By Kevin Wayne

May 17, 2010

<http://chicago.gopride.com/news/article.cfm/articleid/10698049>

Giannoulias announces petition drive for immediate 'DADT' repeal, outlines LGBT support

CHICAGO, IL -- Appearing today with elected and LGBT community leaders, Illinois Treasurer and Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate Alexi Giannoulias introduced his campaign's LGBT steering committee and announced the launch of a petition for immediate repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' (DADT).

"Ten years from now, we will look back in amazement that we denied full and equal rights for LGBT Americans," Giannoulias said during the press conference at the [Center on Halsted](#) in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. "I look at the issue of LGBT equality as one of basic fairness. I was raised to believe that all people are equal, and that we should judge one another by our actions and ideas – not by our race, our religion or our sexual orientation."

Giannoulias was joined by prominent leaders in the Illinois LGBT community including Art Johnston, Alderman Tom Tunney, State Rep. Greg Harris and State Rep. Deb Mell, who last week announced her engagement to her partner on the Illinois House floor.

Opening the press conference at the LGBT community center, Mell referred to Giannoulias as the first statewide candidate to fully support marriage equality rights. "I look forward to him being very active on our issues and furthering our cause in Washington," she said. "I know what's in Alexi's heart because I have seen him fight for equal rights for the past four years."

During the 15 minute press conference, the Illinois Democrat highlighted his commitment to marriage equality, the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and the Defense of Marriage Act and promotion of employment non-discrimination and tax quality. Giannoulias also took aim at his Republican opponent, Congressman Mark Kirk.

Kirk, a five-term North Shore congressman and Navy reservist, supports 'DADT' and opposes marriage equality.

"Congressman Kirk is proud to serve our country in uniform. He supports and abides by the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy," Kirk spokeswoman Kirsten Kukowski told [Politico.com](#).

"Why must I hide my identity, why must I be made to feel shame about who I am, in order to serve my country? Congressman Kirk's position on 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is unconscionable," former Marine Marquell Smith said. Smith and Lee Reinhart, both discharged under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' joined Giannoulias at today's press conference.

"I'm proud to stand on the side of fairness, of decency and of common sense," Giannoulias said in closing.

More information on Alexi Giannoulias' position on LGBT rights can be found on Giannoulias' campaign website, <http://www.alexifori> <http://www.alexiforillinois.com/issues/lgbt-rights>

Kirk's campaign website, www.kirkforsenate.com, makes no reference to any LGBT issues. He is seen as a political moderate.

The Kirk campaign did not respond to requests for comment from ChicagoPride.com.