

Today, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) delivered the following remarks on the House floor in response to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates asking Congress to wait to repeal the discriminatory policy of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The 17-year old edict prohibits openly gay men and women from serving in the military.

“Madam Speaker, the Secretary of Defense has asked Congress not to repeal ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’ until the Pentagon has another year to review the policy. With all due respect, we’ve been reviewing the policy since its implementation in 1993.

To echo the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, here are some reasons why we can’t wait. Another year of dismissals will add to the 13,500 who have already been fired under the law since 1994. Another year will reduce the ranks of mission-critical troops and linguists, harming our national security. Another year will mean we will continue to allow young patriots to *lose* their lives for us, but not allow them to *live* the lives they choose.

Our troops agree, our allies agree, and leaders of our nation agree – we must repeal this policy now. Dr. King wrote, ‘The Time is always right to do what is right.’ Madam Speaker, that is why we can’t wait.”

Video of the speech can be found [here](#) .

Quigley, a member of the Congressional Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equality Caucus, [spoke on the House floor](#) in October in support of repealing the ban and was recently inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame as a Friend of the Community.