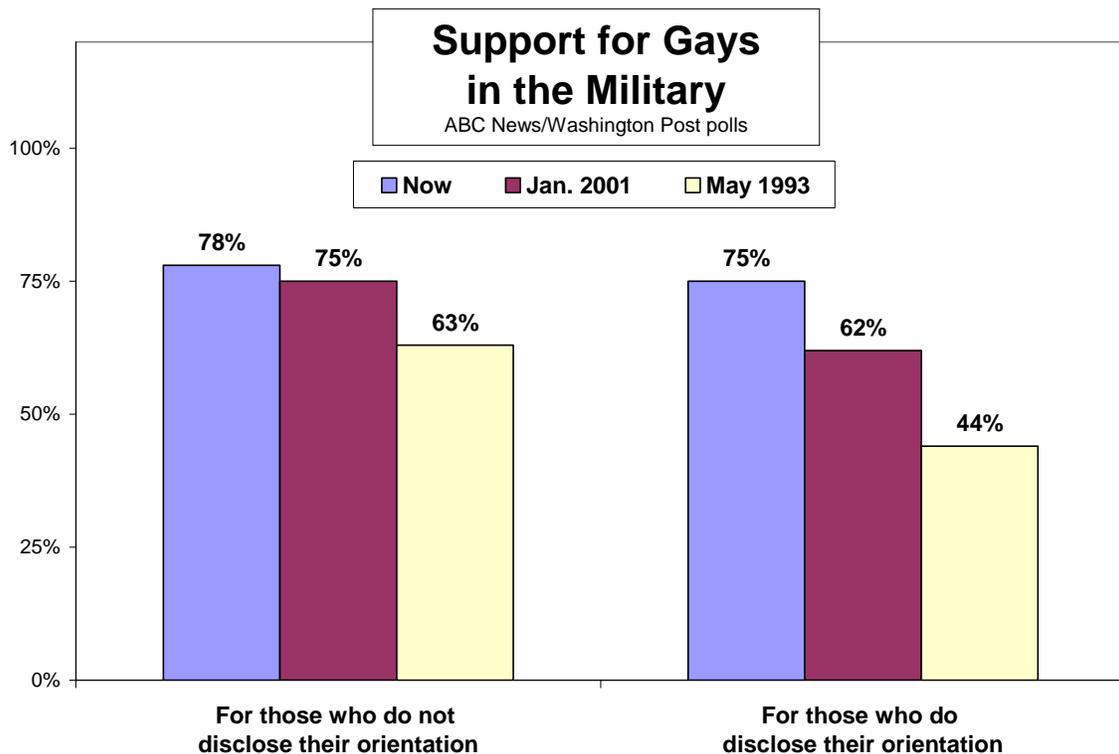


3/4 Support Gays in Military Whether They “Tell” or Don’t

On the 15th anniversary of “don’t ask, don’t tell,” three-quarters of Americans support allowing gays to serve in their military, whether they “tell” or not – much broader support than existed when the compromise policy was put in place.

Military service by gays is backed by large majorities across most groups, including, perhaps surprisingly, Republicans, conservatives and evangelicals. There’s one exception – service by gays who’ve gone public slips to 50 percent among military veterans.

All told, 78 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll say homosexuals who don’t reveal their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve. Moreover, in a rejection of the current policy, about as many, 75 percent, also favor service by homosexuals who do disclose their orientation.



The change in support for openly gay service members has been striking. In 1993 fewer than half – 44 percent – believed they should be allowed to serve, rising to 62 percent in

2001 and today's 75 percent. Support for gays who remain silent on their orientation is up from 63 percent in 1993, though about the same now as in 2001.

GROUPS – Support for allowing gays to serve peaks among liberal Democrats, Catholics and women; it's lower – but still commands majorities – among evangelical Protestants, conservative Republicans, men and seniors.

Among evangelical Protestants, for instance, 62 percent support service by openly gay members of the military and 69 percent support service by gays who remain silent. Fifty-nine percent of conservative Republicans support service by gays who go public, as do 64 percent of all conservatives and all Republicans alike.

Compared with their views in 1993, conservatives, independents, whites, Republicans and men all have moved from minority to majority support for gays serving openly. The largest increase came among conservative Republicans – up 43 points from only 16 percent support in 1993.

	Support for gays in the military			
	If orientation is kept private		If orientation is made public	
	2008	1993	2008	1993
All	78%	63%	75%	44%
Men	71	56	66	35
Women	83	71	83	52
Democrats	80	69	83	54
Independents	79	63	76	42
Republicans	72	55	64	32
Liberals	89	71	90	59
Moderates	81	67	80	50
Conservatives	71	53	64	23
Liberal Democrats	93	78	95	69
Conservative Republicans	70	52	59	16
18-29	75	59	77	41
30-64	80	65	77	45
65+	71	61	67	39
Veterans	71	NA	50	NA
Non-veterans	79	NA	79	NA
Protestants	75	NA	69	NA
Catholics	86	NA	83	NA
No religion	76	NA	80	NA

Support's now 66 percent among men, nearly double its level in 1993; it's 83 percent among women, who tend to be more supportive of gay rights.

More than eight in 10 Catholics support gays serving in the military, whether or not they disclose their orientation. They are as supportive of open military service as seculars and more so than Protestants. And on closed military service, Catholics are more accepting than both Protestants and seculars.

Gay rights in general also tend to be more popular with young adults, but there's little difference on this particular issue among age groups – a further sign of the widespread nature of public acceptance of military service by gays.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 10-13, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,119 adults, including an oversample of African Americans (weighted to their correct share of the national population), for a total of 209 black respondents. The results from the full survey have a 3-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Emily B. Guskin.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-30 previously released.

31. On another subject, do you think homosexuals who do NOT publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
7/13/08	78	18	5
1/15/01	75	22	3
5/23/93	63	35	2

32. Do you think homosexuals who DO publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
7/13/08	75	22	3
1/15/01	62	35	3
5/23/93	44	55	2

END