

Supporting Statement A For:

**DoD COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW WORKING GROUP (CRWG)
ON THE IMPACT OF REPEALING THE
“DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL” POLICY
FOCUS GROUPS with SPOUSES**

11 June 2010

SPOUSE FOCUS GROUPS

Table of Contents

A.	JUSTIFICATION.....	1
A.1	Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary.....	1
A.2.	Purpose and Use of the Information Collection.....	1
A.2.1	Research Questions.....	2
A.2.2	Audiences for Data and Results.....	2
A.3	Use of Information Technology and Burden Reduction.....	2
A.4	Efforts to Identify Duplication.....	3
A.5	Impact on Small Businesses and Other Small Entities.....	3
A.6	Consequence to the Government of less frequent collection.....	3
A.7	Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5.....	3
A.8	Type of Review Requested	3
A.9	Efforts to Consult Outside Agency.....	4
A.10	Explanation of Any Payment of Gift to Respondents.....	4
A.11	Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents.....	5
A.12	Justification for Sensitive Questions.....	5
A.13	Estimates of Hour Burden Including Annualized Hourly Costs.....	6
A.14	Estimate of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record keepers.....	6
A.15	Annualized Cost to the Federal Government.....	6
A.16	Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments.....	7
A.17	Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule.....	7
A.17.1	Analysis Plans for Focus Groups.....	7
A.17.2	Publication Plan.....	7
A.17.3	Time Schedule.....	8
A.18	Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate.....	8
A.19	Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.....	8

A. JUSTIFICATION

A.1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary

In the January 27, 2010, State of the Union address, the President announced that he would work with Congress this year to repeal 10 U.S.C. § 654, the law commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” On February 2, 2010, Secretary Robert Gates, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), announced that he had “appointed a high-level working group within the Department that will immediately begin a review of the issues associated with properly implementing a repeal of the ‘Don't Ask, Don't Tell’ policy.”

This high-level working group, the DoD Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG), has contracted with Westat to systematically engage the armed forces, including spouses to assess and consider any impacts a change in the law would have on military readiness, unit cohesion, morale and family readiness.

This OMB submission relates to qualitative data collection, specifically focus groups, conducted with the spouses of active duty and reserve military members.

A.2. Use of Information

The spouse focus groups are part of a larger project, the objective of which is to obtain an independent analysis that will identify all significant impacts a repeal of the law, commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”, would have on military readiness, unit cohesion, morale and family readiness in order to support the Department's implementation of a change of the law from the perspective of armed forces’ spouses.

Because they are qualitative research, focus groups are not intended to provide data that can be generalized to a population of interest. Instead, focus groups are intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the views of the individuals who participated in the discussion. Participants are invited on the basis of sharing one or more characteristics of interest. In this case, the characteristics of interest are that the participants are all spouses of active duty or reserve component military members. The result of this work

will lead to insights and recommendations essential to the Department's implementation of a change of the law.

A.2.1 Research Questions

The primary research questions for the spouse focus groups are how spouses believe a change in the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy will influence retention of their military spouse and how it will influence family readiness. Among the issues that will be covered are appropriate changes to policies regarding, personnel management, facilities, benefits, and standards of conduct. In addition, the focus groups will address spouse's assessments of how the policy will impact overall military readiness, military effectiveness and unit cohesion.

■ **Research Question 1:** How do spouses believe that the repeal of the law will impact retention of their military spouses?

■ **Research Question 2:** How do spouses believe that the repeal of the law will impact family readiness?

■ **Research Question 3:** How do spouses believe that the repeal of the law will impact overall military readiness, military effectiveness and unit cohesion?

A.2.2 Audiences for Data and Results

The direct audience for these data and results will be decision-makers and analysts within the DoD. Additionally, selected results from this research will be included in briefings to Congress and the White House and in a variety of other communications from the DoD to the public, and other government entities.

A.3 Use of Information Technology and Burden Reduction

Focus groups are informal, but moderated, small group discussions, usually with no more than 10-12 participants. Focus groups generally make very limited use of information technology, other than audio recording.

However, in order to increase participant comfort during these sessions, none of the focus groups sessions will be audio recorded. We will have a note-taker present.

The analysis of the focus groups will be conducted using NVivo8 software. Please see section A17.1 for a more detailed description of this software package and its use.

A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication

We anticipate that duplication is unlikely to occur. Multiple focus group sessions with spouses will directly follow IEF sessions. Only one set of spouse sessions will be held at any single military installation.

A.5 Impact on Small Business and Other Small Entities

The focus groups will not affect small businesses.

A.6. Consequence to the Government of less frequent collection

This is a request for a one-time data collection. This is the first data collection requesting information from spouses on the impact of the repeal of 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' on their spouses and family readiness.

A.7 Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special circumstances related that would require collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.5.

A.8 Type of Review Requested

This collection is being processed under emergency clearance procedures. Public comments have been solicited in the [Federal Register](#) under a shortened timeframe. Comments received will be addressed.

The collection of information related to the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is needed prior to the submission of recommendations from DoD to the White House. The report on the impact of the repeal of the law on spousal family readiness and perceived unit stability and cohesion is needed by September 2010. As data collection procedures require a 2 month field period, and analysis and summary of data requires a month time period, it is necessary to begin data collection procedures no later than 6/10/2010.

DoD has consulted both inside and outside of the agency to ensure that procedures minimize the burden of the collection of information. Individuals consulted are listed in section A.9.

A. 9 Efforts to Consult Outside Agency

DoD has consulted with the following staff at Westat regarding this information collection:

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On DoD's side, those consulted in the development process included:

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A.10 Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

Respondents will not receive any gift or payment for their participation in the focus group sessions.

A.11 Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

Volunteers who participate in this study will be subject to assurances and safeguards as provided by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a), which requires the safeguarding of individuals against invasion of privacy. The Privacy Act also provides for the confidential treatment of records maintained by a Federal agency according to either the individual's name or some other identifier.

Participation in the study is voluntary and respondents will be so informed before participating in the focus groups. Subjects are informed of the measures taken to protect their confidentiality prior to the beginning of the focus groups.

A.12 Justification for Sensitive Questions

The sensitive nature topic of Don't Ask Don't Tell is appreciated. Questions themselves will focus on the spouses' perspectives on the impact a change in the law will have on retention, troop and family readiness, and unit

cohesion and preparedness. Questions will not focus on individual’s own, or feelings toward sexuality.

Study procedures will be designed to make respondents feel as comfortable as possible in answering these questions. These procedures will involve assuring respondents of the confidentiality of their responses and of the voluntary nature of their participation in the focus group, including specific questions that they may prefer not to answer. Furthermore, participants’ names will not appear on any study documents containing data and will not be used in the focus groups. Furthermore, Westat will not have the names of those invited to the sessions and will not take roll, so that it remains unknown to the study which individuals actually attended.

A.13 Estimates of Hour Burden Including Annualized Hourly Costs

Estimates of hour burden and costs to respondents for focus groups are shown in Table A-1. Each focus group will take approximately one hour. The total estimate of respondent burden is 216 hours. Respondent costs were calculated using the most recent National Compensation Survey for hourly rates for all occupations, published on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website. The current hourly rate is \$18.62 and we rounded up to \$19.00. The cost to the respondents for the total burden is estimated to be \$4,104; that is, \$19 per hour for 216 burden hours.

Table A-1. Estimate of respondent burden for DADT (focus groups).

Type of respondent	Estimated number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average hours per response	Annual hour burden	Respondent cost**
Focus Group	216*	1	1.0	216	\$4,104
Total	216*	1	1.0	216	\$4,104

*Assumes 9 participants per focus group.

**Hourly wage rate = \$19.00.

There are no other costs to respondents and no respondent record keeping requirements associated with the field test.

A.14. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record keepers

There are no costs to respondents beyond those presented in Section A.12. There are no operating, maintenance or capital costs associated with the collection.

A.15. Estimates of Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

Based on the current DoD CRWG on the Impact of Repealing the DADT Policy budget, the total cost to the Federal Government for conducting and analyzing focus groups of spouses is \$273,916.

A.16. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

This is a new collection of information.

A.17. Plans for tabulation and publication

The analysis of the data for the focus groups will be included in the final report to the Secretary of Defense due on December 1, 2010. The report will be made public some time after that date.

A.17.1 Analysis Plan for Focus Groups

The written reports for each of the focus groups will be analyzed by senior qualitative analysts using the NVivo8 software package. For the focus group data, the analysts will be able to examine salient patterns and themes for each of the major topical areas in the focus group protocol. Any systematic variations in response patterns to these and other issues will be explored.

Use of the NVivo8 software will facilitate the process of managing and analyzing the large quantities of qualitative data gathered through focus groups. It will enable the ability to conduct and refine the analysis on a flow basis, as the summary reports are received by the analysis team. Moreover, NVivo8 allows auto-coding sections of reports according to heading levels in a Microsoft Word document; we can format the summary forms so the data can be immediately entered into NVivo8. Further, NVivo8 allows the creation of attributes, or sorting variables, by which the thematically coded data can be broken down. It is anticipated that at least the following attributes as applicable: region will be used and Service. Depending on the characteristics of the spouse focus group participants, other attributes may be able to be used.

By following these procedures a systematic top line thematic analysis of focus groups will be able to be produced.

A.17.2 Publication plans

The analysis of the data for the focus groups will be included in the final report to the Secretary of Defense due on December 1, 2010. The report will be made public some time after that date.

A.17.3 Time schedule

The time schedule for data collection is dependent on the timing of OMB clearance. Our project time schedule for the completion of focus groups after OMB approval is given below in Table A.16.

TABLE A.16. PROJECT SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUPS	
Component	Time after OMB approval
Start of focus groups	6/14/2010
Duration of focus groups	6/14/2010 - 8/30/2010
Data analysis of focus groups	6/21/2010 - 9/6/2010
Final report	9/30/2010

A.18 Reasons(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate

DoD is not seeking an exception to the display of the OMB expiration date.

A.19 Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

DoD is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements.