

**Supporting Statement B 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

B.	Collections of information employing statistical methods.....	1
B.1	Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods.....	1
B.1.1	Focus Groups.....	1
B.2.	Procedures for the Collection of Information.....	2
B.2.1	Statistical Methodology for Stratification and Sample Selection.....	2
B.2.2	Problems Requiring Special Sampling Procedures.....	2
B.2.3	Periodic Data Collection to Reduce Burden.....	2
B.2.4	Data Collection Procedures— Focus Groups.....	2
B.2.5	Estimation .....	3
B.3	Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Non-response.....	3
B.3.1	Statistical weighting.....	3
B.3.2	Nonresponse-bias study.....	3
B.4	Test of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken.....	3
B.5	Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data.....	3

## **B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

### **B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods**

This submission refers to qualitative research, specifically focus group discussions, with spouses of active duty and reserve component military members. No statistical sampling methods will be utilized to recruit focus group participants. However, Part B of this submission will address our plans regarding recruiting and conducting these focus group sessions.

#### **B.1.1 Focus Groups**

The respondent universe for the focus groups consists of spouses of active duty military members and spouses of reserve component members.

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.

Because the focus groups will be carried out on military bases, we expect that each session is likely to represent mostly spouses from a single service branch. Depending upon the base, the sessions may have a higher or lower representation of active duty versus reserve component members. Participants will not, however, be recruited on this basis or on the basis of their military members' rank or MOS. Their only qualification for recruitment is that they are married to an active duty or reserve component military member.

Recruiting for the spouse focus groups will be conducted by the CWRG liaisons and their on-site military representatives from among person who were invited to the Information Exchange Forums. No statistical sampling methods will be used for focus groups recruiting.

The goal of the focus groups will be to explore the reactions of spouses to the possible repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell with particular emphasis on how implementation will affect spouses and families. In particular the focus group discussions will cover:

- From the spouse perspective, do you think the military would change?
- Would repeal affect your spouse's decision to stay in or get out of the military? If so, how?
- Would you expect repeal to undermine existing military marriages?
- Would repeal impact your willingness to recommend military service to someone who is considering joining?
- What positive aspects of repeal do you see?
- What impact, if any do you expect on your children?
- What impact, if any, on unit social events?
- Are you concerned repeal will impact the military's ability to provide chaplains who represent your belief structure?

## **B.2 Procedures for the Collection of Information**

This section describes procedures that will be performed before, during, and after data collection.

### **B.2.1 Statistical Methodology for Stratification and Sample Selection**

We will undertake no statistical sampling or sample stratification for the focus groups.

### **B.2.2 Problems Requiring Special Sampling Procedures**

We do not anticipate any problems require special sampling procedures.

### **B.2.3 Periodic Data Collection to Reduce Burden**

This request is for a one-time data collection.

### **B.2.4 Data Collection Procedures - Focus Groups**

Twenty-four spouse focus groups at 12 locations, with 2 groups per location, will be conducted. Each focus group will be staffed with an experienced moderator who will guide the flow of discussion using the focus group protocol and a note taker charged with taking detailed, comprehensive notes on the discussion. A summary of each focus group session in report format will be developed. The report will use a standardized template formatted for use with NVivo8 software.

**Reporting:** The summaries each of the focus groups will be analyzed by senior qualitative analysts using the NVivo8 software package. The analysts will be able to examine salient patterns and themes for each of the major topical areas addressed in the focus group script. Any systematic variations in response patterns to these and other issues by Service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard) will be explored.

Use of the NVivo8 software will facilitate the process of managing and analyzing the large quantities of qualitative data gathered through the focus groups. It will enable us to conduct and refine the analysis on a flow basis, as the summary reports are received by the analysis team. NVivo8 allows auto-coded sections of reports according to heading levels in a Microsoft Word document; formatted summary forms can be immediately entered into NVivo8. Further, NVivo8 allows us to create attributes, or sorting variables, by which the thematically coded data can be broken down.

### **B.2.5 Estimation**

Focus groups are qualitative research and do not lend themselves to population proportion estimation. No such estimation will be made using focus group data.

## **B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Non-Response**

The spouse focus groups will be held directly after spouse Information Exchange Forums (IEFs) and in a convenient nearby location. They will last approximately one hour. No names will be used during the sessions and spouses who attend will be specifically told that their participation is voluntary and they do not have to participate if they do not wish to do so.

### **B.3.1 Statistical Weighting**

There will be no statistical weighting related to the focus group data.

### **B.3.2 Nonresponse-Bias Study**

There will be no nonresponse-bias study of the focus group data.

### **B.4 Test of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken**

Focus groups are informal, free-flowing, but moderated discussions. They do not require that the same questions be asked in the same way and in the same order each time. Instead, what is important is that the moderator be able to make sure that all the key topics are covered at some point in the session. The focus group moderator's guide, which specifies these topics, was provided to Westat by CRWG. Westat reviewed the guide and is using it for the sessions.

### **B.5 Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and/or Analyzing Data**

The individuals consulted on focus group data analysis issues are listed below.

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

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## **References:**

Kreuger, Richard A, Casey, Mary Anne (2000) *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research Third Edition*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Steward, David W., et. al., eds. (2007) *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice* , Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.