

STATEMENT OF DETERMINATION
Military Spouse Focus Groups

1. In accordance with 5 CFR 1320.13, the senior official, or designee, of the Department of Defense has determined that this collection of information is needed prior to the expiration of the time periods under 5 CFR 1320, and that it is essential to the mission of the agency. The agency cannot reasonably follow the normal clearance procedures under 5 CFR 1320, due to the immediate need to collect information as part of the Department of Defense Comprehensive Review Working Group's (CRWG) study of issues associated with a repeal of the law known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The Secretary of Defense assigned the CRWG to study what impact, if any, repeal would have on military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting, retention, and family readiness. As an opportunity for the families of service members to share their feelings on the issue with the CRWG and the military's senior leadership, these focus groups are a critical part of the CRWG's efforts. Military families are an essential part of the military community and their reactions to the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" could have significant influence on the behavior of their spouses and the impact of repeal on recruiting, retention, and family readiness.

2. The Department of Defense Comprehensive Review Working Group's (CRWG) is submitting the subject requirement for emergency review and approval. This emergency submission is necessary because the collection analysis of information related to the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is needed prior to the submission of CRWG's report to the Secretary of Defense on December 1, 2010. To inform the report to the Secretary, the initial report on the impact of the repeal of the law on spousal family readiness and perceived unit stability and cohesion is needed by mid-September 2010. As data collection procedures needed to ensure high response rates 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 June 10, 2010. If the focus groups are not approved under an emergency process, it will impede the Department's ability to collect information from the families of service members and the CRWG's ability to fulfill its tasking by the Secretary of Defense to study the impact of repeal on military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting, retention, and family readiness.

3. The information that is requested is the minimum necessary to comply with applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and prudent business practices.