



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

SEP 20 2016

Service members, Families, and Veterans

Five years after the Department's implementation of the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," our Military Service members, stationed across the globe and supported by their families, exemplify the very best that our great Nation has to offer. On this noteworthy anniversary, I am proud to be able to say that the Department of Defense today represents every cross-section of American culture—our diversity is our strength.

From repeal forward, the Department of Defense has reinforced its commitment to the ideals and values that our Nation and its military forces represent and defend. At the core of this commitment is our ethos that the United States military should be open to all who can meet our rigorous standards for military service and readiness, and that all who serve, or have served, together with their families, should be treated with dignity and respect.

In this spirit, all Service members, Veterans, and family members should be proud of their service. If there is something in your record of service that you believe unjust, we have proven and effective policies and procedures by which to consider and correct such errors. To be plain, I know that some Service members may have been given less than honorable discharges solely on the basis of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and its precursor laws and policies. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is a vestige of our past, and I encourage you to honor the fifth anniversary of the Department's implementation of its repeal by coming forward to request correction. Whether you seek to have a document revised, a discharge upgraded, or seek something else you believe was wrongly denied you, we have skilled, caring people and fair and effective policies to assist you. If you received a discharge under less than honorable conditions and believe this unjust, file a petition, providing whatever you can in support of your request. The Department has a demonstrably strong record of addressing these matters, and I assure you that we will continue this tradition. I know that we cannot promise an outcome, but we do guarantee a fair and effective process.

Thank you for your continued faith and confidence in the American military. Thank you especially to that unique and remarkable portion of our population that risks all to serve in challenging times, past and present—and to the families that have supported them throughout.

With great respect.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Levine".

Peter Levine
Acting