

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 3, 2011

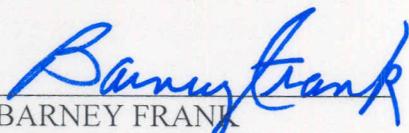
President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

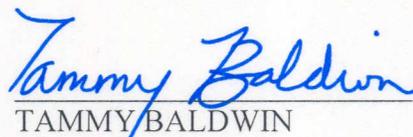
Dear Mr. President,

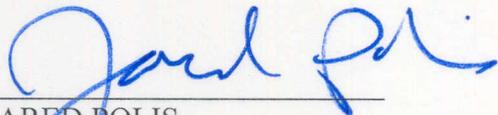
We very much appreciate the leadership your administration – and you personally – provided in the successful effort to repeal the unfair and counterproductive “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law. As you know, the Republican majority in the House, while paying homage to the popularity of that repeal with the American public by refraining from directly reinstating the policy, sought to achieve that through indirection by including provisions in the Defense Authorization bill that jeopardized the process of implementing last year’s vote.

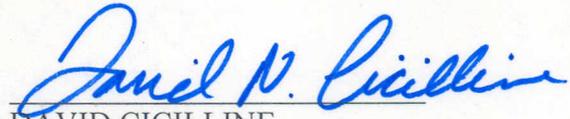
We also appreciate the fact that in your statement of administration policy on that bill, you expressed your opposition to those provisions. But some questions have been raised by opponents of the policy who have noted a distinction between those provisions of the House passed bill that you noted could lead to a veto, and the absence of such language regarding the anti- “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” provisions. We believe it would therefore be extremely useful for you to make clear that if the final bill presented to you does include these sections, which would undermine the end to discrimination in the military, that you will veto the bill on that ground.

We do not anticipate that our Senate colleagues will go along with this effort to undermine the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” both because we believe the Senate majority continues to oppose the discriminatory policy involved, and also because the House Republican provisions would undermine the effective operation of the Defense Department by empowering individual service chiefs to veto decisions made by the chain of command. But because this issue is so important in so many ways, we think it would be the best course for you to reaffirm your strong support of the end of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” by making it explicit that you would veto a bill in the unlikely event that it came to you, which undermined the decision that you led us to make last year – namely a military that does not discriminate unfairly and does not turn away patriotic, productive Americans seeking to serve their country.


BARNEY FRANK
Member of Congress


TAMMY BALDWIN
Member of Congress


JARED POLIS
Member of Congress


DAVID CICILLINE
Member of Congress