



## Information About SLDN's Legal Services

### **Does Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) Really Provide Legal Assistance to Service Members?**

**Yes**, as long as their issues fall within our mission.

SLDN is a civilian non-profit legal aid and policy organization that provides free, confidential legal services to service members impacted by “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and other related forms of intolerance.

### **When should a service member contact SLDN for legal assistance?**

There are many situations when a service member should contact SLDN. Service members should contact SLDN immediately if they believe they might be under investigation for violating “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

Here are some other examples of situations where a service member should call SLDN:

- Is experiencing harassment;
- Is threatened with being “outed” by either another service member or a civilian;
- Is thinking about “coming out” to the military;
- Wants to adopt their partner’s child and has questions about registering dependents;
- Has tested HIV+;
- Wants to know if they can go to a gay bar or Pride event;
- Wants to get married or have a civil union;
- Has questions about being transgender and serving in the military;
- Wants to post an online profile but isn’t sure how to do it safely;
- Has questions about access to benefits if they are discharged under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell;”
- Wants to know if they can safely talk to a therapist or counselor.
- Any other question or issue related to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

### **Does SLDN represent clients who are charged with criminal offenses under the UCMJ?**

**No**, SLDN does not represent clients in criminal cases but we often work with military criminal defense attorneys to advise and consult on the specific aspects of the case dealing with issues of sexual orientation or arising under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

### **Does SLDN engage in other legal work?**

**Yes**, SLDN also participates in impact litigation aimed at challenging the constitutionality of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and litigation aimed at ending the military’s criminal prosecution of consensual sodomy. In 2004, SLDN along with the law firm WilmerHale, filed a case on behalf of 12 service members discharged under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” claiming the law violates their constitutional rights. The case was dismissed at District Court and oral arguments in front of the 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals were held in March 2007. SLDN and WilmerHale are awaiting a decision. SLDN has also filed multiple amicus briefs in cases where the military was prosecuting service members for engaging in consensual sodomy.

### **How do I contact an SLDN attorney?**

You can either call (202.328.3244, ext. 100) or email ([legal@sldn.org](mailto:legal@sldn.org)) SLDN to schedule an appointment with one of our legal staff.