

2008 Annual Report

SERVICEMEMBERS LEGAL DEFENSE NETWORK



In the courts
representing
those harmed



Across the
country
educating the
public



On the Hill
advocating
for legislative
repeal

About SLDN

Mission Statement

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) is a national, non-profit, legal services and policy watchdog organization that seeks to ensure all qualified Americans have the freedom to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces regardless of sexual orientation. SLDN is committed to repealing the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) ban on open service for members of the armed forces based on sexual orientation, while also protecting service members from discrimination and related forms of intolerance that stem from DADT. Further, SLDN advocates policies that improve the lives of all members of the military and strengthen organizational capacity to advance the freedom to serve in the most cost-effective, strategic means possible.

SLDN is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization that has worked tirelessly since 1993 on behalf of the men and women in uniform who served in silence under DADT. SLDN is the only organization in the country that provides free legal services to those impacted by this ban, which denies those who defend our nation the most basic of rights – the freedom to live openly about the very essence of who they are as human beings.

Contact Information

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network
PO Box 65301, Washington DC 20035-5301
Tel: 202 325 3244
Fax: 202 797 1635
Email: sldn@sldn.org
Web: www.sldn.org

SLDN Staff

Aubrey Sarvis, Executive Director
Francisco Ramirez, Chief Operating and Financial Officer
John Goodman, of Counsel
Sadie Davis, Paul DeMiglio, Jessica Garth, David Hall, Emily Hecht, Susan LaBombard, Ben Mishkin, Kevin Nix, Elise Ravenscroft, Erica Reardon, Victor Santillan, Jr., Aaron Tax, and Jeremy Wilson-Simerman.

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SLDN meets the BBB Wisegiving Alliance and Charity Navigator Standards for charity accountability.

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A. Year In Review

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network continues to lead the fight against discrimination in our armed forces, strengthening coalitions and forging new alliances with service members, veterans, top military leaders, members of Congress, as well as with straight and gay allies. SLDN salutes its diverse team of supporters who have brought us closer than ever before to lifting the ban.

Throughout 2008, SLDN remained on the forefront in building momentum for ultimate repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT). From successfully engaging leaders on Capitol Hill to expanding services for those impacted by DADT, SLDN led the fight to overturn discrimination in the armed forces on the national stage through increased grassroots organizing, policy advocacy and media outreach. With a bipartisan coalition of close to 150 cosponsors in the House of Representatives, SLDN led reintroduction of the Military Readiness Enhancement Act (HR 1246), which would allow members of the armed forces to serve openly regardless of sexual orientation.

Thank You

None of the activities described on the following pages would have been possible without the support of our generous donors and advocates. Together we have made great progress towards repeal of this unjust law, and together we will continue to work side by side on all fronts until the ban is lifted and all qualified gay and lesbian Americans have the freedom to serve.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network thanks everyone who has made a contribution—of money, time and/or talent—in support of our work. All contributions are greatly appreciated and vital to advancing the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

Our goal is to link activists, donors and the community through education and action. Together, we are strengthening military readiness and transforming the legal landscape for service members around the world.

Thank you for making a difference in the life of a service member.

1. LEGAL SERVICES

SLDN's legal team consists of full-time attorneys, one legal coordinator, and usually one or two law school interns. We provide educational opportunities for law students by offering unpaid full-time and part-time internships and we also partner with law firms on pro bono projects.

In the fall of 2008, our legal team responded to the 9,000th call for help since our founding in 1993. In total, SLDN's legal team responded to nearly 700 calls for assistance and opened 234 new cases last year.

At the end of 2008, the legal team had 135 open cases, including several for service members who are being discharged after more than 15 years of service. These men and women have put their lives on the line for our country, and now they stand to lose not only their careers but also the pensions they have earned and counted on for retirement. Our attorneys are working to help these service members achieve the best possible outcome and to save their pensions—as they have for hundreds of others over the past 15 years.

The categorization of a discharge is a critical factor in a former service member's employment opportunities. Thus, the legal team initiated a new program to assist service members discharged under DADT or the prior regulatory ban with filing petitions for discharge upgrades. In 2008, we screened approximately 30 service members for potential upgrades and selected four to assist.

In addition to direct legal services, the legal team engages in outreach, education, and training activities. Last year, our attorneys attended more than two dozen events and speaking engagements, conducted a DADT training session with the Navy Legal Services Officers, conducted three CLE courses, and presented at two national LGBT conferences. The team also worked with allies to submit several proposals to the Obama transition team on actions that the President could take to improve the lives of LGBT service members and veterans.

The majority of SLDN's new clients continued to be young, enlisted women and men from a variety of backgrounds—Asian, black, white, Hispanic, and Native American—from all branches of the military.

2. COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

SLDN's communications/media program continued to play a crucial role in educating the public, engaging supporters, and building visible public support, which ultimately will transform into political support for change. During 2008, SLDN succeeded in obtaining significant media coverage by mainstream broadcast, cable, radio, Internet, and print media, while continuing to ensure coverage in the LGBT press.

In July, SLDN raised the visibility of DADT by generating coverage surrounding the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel hearing, the first on DADT since the law was enacted in 1993. Given the historic nature of the hearing, it attracted widespread media interest. Two members of SLDN's Military Advisory Council (MAC) testified at the hearing. Retired Navy Captain Joan Darrah appeared on several television and radio programs in connection with her testimony. The broadcast programs included NBC Nightly News, ABC's Good Morning America, C-SPAN's Washington Journal, the Diane Rehm Show, and Barry Lynn's Culture Shocks.

Throughout the year, SLDN reached out to editorial boards and media outlets across the country. Our efforts resulted in dozens of favorable articles, editorials, op-eds, and letters to newspaper editors that appeared in publications including: Time, Newsweek, Washington Post, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Kansas City Star, Dayton Daily News, Denver Post, Boulder Daily Camera, Seattle Times, Portland Oregonian, Houston Chronicle, Las Vegas Sun, Sacramento Bee, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Baltimore Sun, and New Hampshire Union Leader. The executive director began posting a near-weekly blog on the Huffington Post, which continues.

SLDN reached approximately 10 million viewers when CBS's "60 Minutes" ran a follow-up story on former Army Sergeant Darren Manzella, a decorated Iraqi veteran who was discharged in June under DADT. Manzella served as an openly gay soldier and received overwhelming support from both his fellow soldiers and superiors since coming out while on active duty.

Online

In the fall of 2008, SLDN's communications team began working with Blue State Digital, the highly-regarded Internet and technology consulting firm. As a result of an innovative online strategy aimed at increasing grassroots and donor activity, SLDN's website is more navigable and includes improved tools that make online advocacy and giving significantly easier. In the last quarter alone, SLDN's website attracted more than 33,000 visits.

Speakers Bureau

SLDN also strengthened our Speakers Bureau by adding new members, including straight allies such as Rear Admiral Jamie Barnett (Ret.). We continue to engage and seek others to help bolster our case with Congress, the White House, the Pentagon, and the public. In coordination with our grassroots program, we have begun to identify new audiences and targeted locations for Speakers Bureau presentations.

3. GRASSROOTS, COLLABORATION, OUTREACH & EDUCATION:

SLDN engaged in outreach and education efforts with the two major political parties in 2008. In August, these efforts paid off with the inclusion of a plank in the Democratic platform calling for repeal of DADT. Similar efforts with congressional staff and members were successful, too, as evidenced by a record 149 co-sponsors on House legislation HR 1246 (Military Readiness Enhancement Act) to repeal DADT. Our goal is 200+ co-sponsors in the 111th Congress.

Target States

SLDN identified several states where our limited resources could make a real difference in the fight to repeal DADT. These states are Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maine, Michigan, and Missouri, although these targets may change depending on the political environment. Key objectives in SLDN's grassroots strategy included engaging veterans—straight and gay—and other individuals and organizations whose voices can be influential in the public discourse on DADT.

We had particular success in Missouri, where we developed solid relationships with PROMO, a statewide LGBT advocacy group; the Heartland Men's Chorus, which has a large number of members who are veterans; Four Freedoms, an LGBT political group; and political leaders/operatives. Working with these groups and individuals in the state, SLDN has ensured that DADT has been raised in several forums, including town hall meetings and other events attended by political leaders. Further, this collaboration has resulted in volunteer meetings with key Members of Congress, calls to the White House, letters to newspaper editors, and introduction in a state legislature of a resolution calling for repeal of DADT.

Capitol Hill Rally & Dinner

In March SLDN's Capitol Hill Rally attracted approximately 250 participants. Our 16th Annual National Dinner featured keynote speaker Tipper Gore, as well as special guests, including Ambassador Michael Guest and Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-NV). The event honored former Army Sergeant Darren Manzella with the Barry Winchell Courage Award.

Pride Events

Pride events are opportunities to educate, recruit, and engage grassroots advocates. These events also are a means of getting more repeal DADT petitions signed and sent to Congress and the President. In 2008, SLDN had a presence at 43 pride events.

Chaplains Forum

SLDN launched the Military Chaplaincy Forum to promote dialogue and understanding among religious leaders (in the military and beyond) on the need to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” During the 1993 debate about gays in the military, the military chaplaincy corps was an important voice. Thus, it is critical that we lay a foundation of support, or at the very least lessen any potential resistance, among chaplains as we work to repeal the law.

The Forum has approximately 27 members, who represent diverse faiths, including Protestant, Jewish, and Roman Catholic, and all branches of the military. Members include retired chaplains, ministers, and others. Many members are respected leaders in religious communities such as the Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth and the United Church of Christ.

Forum members have met with active duty chaplains and current chaplaincy leaders and responses have been positive. In addition, Forum members have addressed “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in their blogs, opinion editorials, lectures to church groups and community organizations, and in sermons (including sermons in at least one Baptist church). They also are nearing completion of a white paper regarding chaplain confidentiality—an issue of great concern to service members who seek spiritual guidance or who reach out to chaplains when they are harassed or threatened. We anticipate that other publications will be forthcoming.

The Chaplaincy Forum is an important part of SLDN’s activities to work within the military. The Forum members’ work also has the potential to secure greater understanding and tolerance with religious leaders outside the military—an important step to achieve equality throughout our society.

B. Leadership

Board of Directors*

Boskind, Paul Alan PhD.-San Antonio, TX
 Chang, Julian C.L., Esq - San Francisco, CA
 Clark, CDR Thomas C., USNR (Ret.)-New York, NY
 Cleghorn, Jeff-Atlanta, GA
 Courter, Amy S.-South Lyon, MI
 Curren, Anna M.-San Diego, CA
 Dunning, Zoe-Board Co-Chair - San Francisco, CA
 Easley, Joe Tom, Esq.-Board Co-Chair - Miami, FL & New York, NY
 Fricke, Brian-Washington, D.C.
 Gainer, CMSgt David Lee, USAF (Ret.)-Dallas, TX
 Gardina, Jackie-Vermont
 Magee, Michael-San Diego, CA
 McCormack, Joe-Los Angeles, CA
 McLaughlin, Shannon L., Esq.-Boston, MA
 Neira, Paula M., RN, CEN, Esq., LT, USNR (1985-1991)-Bowie, MD
 Smith, Ray-McLean, VA
 Steckler, Frederick-Washington, DC
 Weiderpass, Mati-New York, NY
 Wujciak, Barbara-Hillsborough, NC
 Wynne, Anne S.-Austin, TX
 Zuniga, Jose-Chicago, IL

MAC Military Advisory Council*

Barnes, Jr., COL Robert V. Barnes, Jr., USA (Ret.)
 Beard, COL Graham E., USA (Ret.)
 Bornhoft, COL Stewart, USA, (Ret.)
 Cammermeyer, COL Margarethe, USA (Ret.)
 Carpenter, Capt Tom, USMC (1970-1976)
 Carucci, CAPT Dan, MD, PhD, USN (Ret.)
 Caviness, CAPT Susanne, Ph.D., USPHS
 Coleman, MG Vance, USA (Ret.)
 Coye, Beth F., Commander USN (Ret.)
 Darrah, CAPT Joan E., USN (Ret.)
 Dockendorff, CAPT Robert D., USNR (Ret.)
 Dodd, Chaplain (COL) Paul W., D.Min., USA (Ret.)
 Field, COL Thomas F., USAR (Ret.)
 Foster, Lt. COL. Jay D.P., US Army (Ret.)
 Geiselman, Sandy, CAPT, USNR (Ret.)
 Heinze, CAPT April F., Civil Engineer Corps, USN (Ret.)
 Johnson, Pepe N., Sergeant
 Kearney, Brendan P., COL, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)
 Kelleher, Arthur J., MC, USNR (Ret.)
 Kerr, BG Keith H., CSMR (Ret.)
 Korb, Lawrence J., Fmr. Asst. Sec. of Def.
 Laich, MG Dennis J.
 Leonard, COL E.A. USA (Ret.)
 McLeod, First Sergeant Lee Roy, USA (Ret.)
 Patton III, MCPOCG Vincent W., USCG (Ret.)
 Paty, Jennifer L., Navy Career Counselor Master Chief, NCCM (SW) (CMC) USN (Ret.)
 Rankin, Robert Michael, M.D., Capt, MC, USN, (Ret.)
 Raphael, SGM Nan, USA (Ret.)
 Richard, BG Virgil A., USA (Ret.)
 Scott, COL Kevin M. USMC (Ret.)
 Steinman, RADM Alan M., MD, USPHS/USCG (Ret.)
 Wilgenbusch, LCDR Craig A., USNR

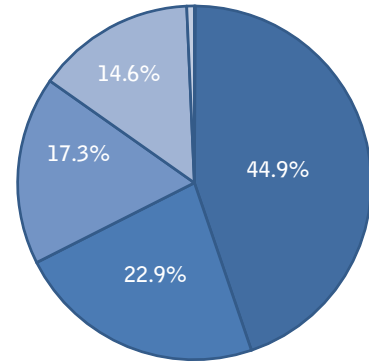
*Board members as of August 2009

C. Audited Financials

January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008

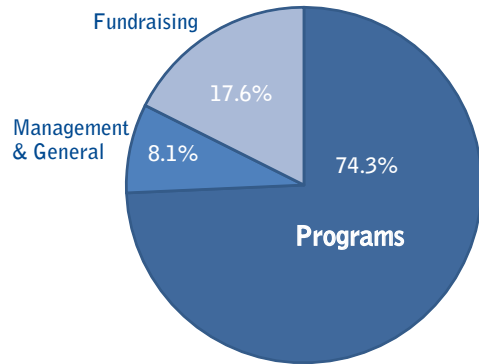
Revenue

	2008	
Contributions	\$1,458,323	44.9%
Charitable Bequest	\$743,355	22.9%
Grants	\$561,488	17.3%
In-Kind Contributions	\$472,382	14.6%
Other Income	\$7,773	0.2%
Interest Income	\$2,961	0.1%
Total Revenue	\$3,246,282	



Expenses

Program Services	\$2,081,898	74.3%
Management and General	\$225,324	8.1%
Fundraising	\$493,790	17.6%
Total Expenses	\$2,801,012	



Change in Net Assets	\$445,270
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$900,763
Net Assets, End of Year	\$1,346,033

E. Ways to Give

SLDN
Development Office
PO Box 65301
Washington DC 20035

SLDN is registered as a tax-exempt public charity by the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501(c)(3).

SLDN's tax identification number is 52-1845000.

To request a copy of SLDN's 501(c)(3) certificate of tax exemption, please contact the Development Office.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network thanks everyone who has made a contribution—of money, time and/or talent—in support of our work. All contributions are greatly appreciated and vital to advancing the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” SLDN offers a broad range of outstanding giving opportunities that are designed to ensure the continued quality of SLDN’s services and programs. SLDN makes it easy to give. Learn how you can make a gift today.

- 1. Outright Cash Gifts**
Choose one of the most popular and preferred ways to give to SLDN.
- 2. Corporate Matching Gifts**
Explore an exceptional opportunity for corporations and businesses to support SLDN.
- 3. Securities**
Give a gift of securities that may provide you with tax benefits. By directly donating stock, you may avoid the payment of capital gains tax. Consult your tax advisor for more information
- 4. Commemorative Giving**
Remembering or honoring a loved one is easy when you send a gift in their name.
- 5. Bequests**
You can remember SLDN in your will by designating us as the beneficiary of a portion of your estate, your residual estate, or by leaving us specific assets you name.
- 6. Workplace Campaigns**
Give through the Combined Federal Campaign, your local city or state campaign, or your own company's workplace giving program. SLDN's CFC# is 12111.
- 7. GoodSearch**
GoodSearch is the search engine with a unique social mission - to give to charities just by searching the internet. They donate 50 percent of advertising revenue to the nonprofits and schools selected by its users. It's powered by Yahoo, so you get the same great search results. Simply go to goodsearch.com to start searching today. Be sure to choose SLDN as the recipient organization.
- 8. Foundation Support**
SLDN staff is available to complete letters of inquiry, funding proposals, and grant applications as well as provide financial and other supporting materials required by foundations and corporations interested in donating to SLDN.
- 9. Monthly Gift Giving Program**
You can now support SLDN with automatic scheduled payments that you control. You can give to SLDN through your credit card, checking account, or savings account.

We can help with these giving opportunities. Contact the Development Office at 202-328-3244, sldn@sldn.org, or visit us at sldn.org to learn more.

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network | PO Box 65301 | Washington, DC 20035-3501 | tel 202 328•3244 | fax 202 797•1635 | www.sldn.org

