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## MILITARY PARTNERS AND FAMILIES COALITION CELEBRATES THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPEAL OF DADT

WASHINGTON, DC, September 20, 2012 – A year after the military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (DADT) policy was officially repealed, we can look back at all of the amazing progress we have made and truly be proud. It has only been a year since we, as partners and families of LGB servicemembers, were finally able to breathe a collective sigh of relief as we no longer were burdened with hiding our families for fear of our partners being fired for loving us. Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC) has had a very busy year reaching out to other national military family support organizations and overwhelmingly, we have been welcomed with open arms.

“The response has been amazing,” said, Ariana Bostian-Kentes, President and co-founder of MPFC. “I don’t know if any of us could have dreamed of a better reception into the military community. Our families are finally being recognized for exactly who we are: average military families who just want to love and support our servicemembers.”

Creating a network of support for our families has been paramount to MPFC’s mission in the last year. MPFC boasts relationships with more than 10 coalition member organizations, including National Military Family Association, Blue Star Families and Hiring Our Heroes. For the resources that do not yet exist elsewhere for our families, MPFC has led the way, having conducted the first ever community study survey of the mental and physical health concerns of LGBT servicemembers and their families, created a monthly Virtual Family Meeting program where our families can connect via online video chat to discuss the issues they are facing and hear from expert facilitators, and having launched the MPFC Battle Buddies program where partners and spouses can connect with one another to receive one-on-one advice and support through deployments and reintegration.

“We aren’t that different than other spouses: We want our servicemember to serve, train and deploy for this nation without worrying about us back at home,” said Tracey Hepner, MPFC co-founder and wife of the military’s first openly gay general, Brig. Gen. Tammy Smith.

As we reflect on what the anniversary of the repeal of DADT means to us, it is important that we take time to celebrate our successes and at the same time, refocus on the work we have yet to accomplish. Achieving benefits parity for all military families and open service for our transgender troops remain crucial to the broader success of our military.

Our families have faced the same challenges as any military family in a decade that has included two wartime theaters. One year after repeal of DADT, we are comforted in knowing that we have created a patchwork of support for our LGBT military families, but we remain aware that we are excluded from the legal safety net provided to all other military families. Military service and sacrifice is a common denominator that everyone understands; MPFC looks forward to the year ahead and the changes we see on the horizon that will ensure that all those who serve and sacrifice are supported equally.

**Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC)** is a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C., and was founded in 2011 by a group of partners of active duty U.S. Armed Forces servicemembers. MPFC provides support, resources, education and advocacy for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender military partners and their families. For more information, go to [www.milpfc.org](http://www.milpfc.org)