



# Political Insiders Poll



**Politically, how should your party respond to the drive to repeal “don’t ask, don’t tell”?**

## ■ Democrats (102 votes)

Party should support repeal	82 percent
Party should oppose repeal	2 percent
Party should downplay the issue	14 percent

*Volunteered: Support but downplay, 1 percent; right policy, tricky politics, 1 percent.*

### ■ Support repeal

“As an Insider, I know I should care about this, but it is so yesterday. Let ‘em serve.”

“Embrace it: Does anyone really think the Israeli army can’t fight?”

“It is the right thing to do. It is going to happen. And we need to get it over with. The world is changing.”

“This is a no-brainer: It will help the military get stronger. It’s the right thing to do. And nearly 80 percent of Americans support it. We should lean into it.”

“My party should not care if someone is gay or straight; they should only care if they can shoot straight.”

“Might as well come out of the closet; it might at least excite some of their base.”

“The more Republicans talk about whether two men can kiss, the more they look out of touch. No one under 30 understands the Republican obsession with homosexuality.”

“We get nothing from moderate positioning on this.”

“History will prove us right, but there will be a short-term cost.”

“This is an issue that once we do it, it will go away relatively quickly.”

“Supporting the repeal is an investment in the next generation of voters who are way beyond the political on this issue.”

“But also offer legislation that will double the pay of enlisted men and women.”

“When most military leadership supports repeal, you’ve got all the cover you need.”

“If Iowa can allow same-sex couples to marry, then the United States government should at the very least repeal ‘don’t ask, don’t tell.’”

### ■ Downplay the issue

“Do whatever the DOD says to do—and move on.”

“Not sure how this helps us with indie voters, but it is the right thing to do.”

“It is an issue that will hurt Republicans in suburbs if they too-actively oppose.”

## ■ Republicans (101 votes)

Party should support repeal	13 percent
Party should oppose repeal	31 percent
Party should downplay the issue	50 percent

*Volunteered: Wait for military report, 3 percent; follow military’s lead, 2 percent; find out impact on troop morale, then decide, 1 percent.*

### ■ Support repeal

“The American people have moved well past irrational fear of gays. And it’s time the GOP did as well.”

“Intolerance and gay baiting have resulted in losing younger and suburban voters in the past and could well do the same this year.”

### ■ Oppose repeal

“Let’s call this what it is: Democrats care more about their donors than defending the country.”

“Moving before the military has been polled risks a backlash.”

“Oppose anything that looks like Western Europe social or economic policies.”

“Without being too belligerent: It’s appropriate to note that we are in the middle of two wars and a Pentagon study is under way.”

“The fact that the Joint Chiefs oppose it shows the time isn’t right. We’ve moved a long way since this was implemented, but it’s still not time for repeal.”

### ■ Downplay the issue

“Don’t we have more important matters to deal with at this juncture?”

“Repeal is inevitable. Let it happen, quietly, so we’re not still talking about it 17 years from now.”

“This issue will not help drive voters to polls.”

“No good can come of shining a light on this issue when people can’t find work.”

“This is going to happen, and Republicans don’t want to look intolerant going into fall elections.”

“The Democrats and independents fleeing Obama are social liberals shocked by the administration’s war on business. We would do well not to remind them why they once rejected the GOP.”

“Our base is plenty riled up already: We don’t need to get focused on something other than jobs and economic recovery. Overplay of this issue makes us look both intolerant and out of touch.”

“Unless the military is going to fight this, swing voters are ready to join the 21st century.”

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL



# Political Insiders Poll



## Grade President Obama's handling of the oil spill.

### Democrats (102 votes)

Average grade: **C-**

<b>A</b>	<b>2 percent</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>26 percent</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>37 percent</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>29 percent</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>5 percent</b>

Volunteered: A on substance, F on PR, 1 percent.

B+. "It was the mainstream (New York to D.C.) media that did not pay attention to the story at first. But the federal government has been engaged the entire time."

B. "The White House has resisted demands to take over BP's oil spill operation. Smart move."

B. "Carville versus Obama: James's 15 minutes of fame expired long ago."

C. "And I am being kind. After Katrina, anything bad that happens in the Gulf Coast is political dynamite."

C. "The O has not done a good job at understanding the role of president to lead us in an effort to save the environment."

C. "Too little sense of urgency and command in the early days. And too much confidence in BP's ability to handle this crisis."

C-. "I understand trying to have a good answer before taking control but, wow, did they look Bush-incompetent."

D. "While it's easy to say it's BP's fault and only BP has the know-how to fix it, somehow I don't think most Americans thought this was the change they were voting for in 2008."

D. "The impulse to avoid drama can cause you to miss the play."

D. "Didn't take it seriously enough in beginning. His aloofness has hurt."

F. "Sadly, his campaign adversaries were right about the dangers of an inexperienced president."

F. "Not sure there is much more he could do. But if you ask voters, they will say it has been a failure."

### Republicans (101 votes)

Average grade: **D-**

<b>A</b>	<b>0 percent</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>23 percent</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>47 percent</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>29 percent</b>

Volunteered: Not even a gentleman's C, 1 percent.

C. "Tough spot to be in: No control, and everyone blames you."

C-. "If this indeed is the largest environmental disaster in American history, President Obama needs to act like it is."

C-. "Obama's core voter attribute was competence. And this has taken a big hit because of the Gulf oil spill."

D. "I would imagine those in the Obama administration who were overly critical of Bush and Katrina have a different perspective now."

D. "When James Carville is attacking Obama, you know a line has been crossed."

D. "Once again, Mr. Spock has looked too cool and too disinterested for far too long."

D. "To be fair, the federal government has been involved from the beginning, but Obama hasn't looked like a leader. And perception is reality."

D. "Too slow, too casual, and too trusting of BP to instill confidence that the White House has it under control."

F. "As long as oil continues to spew, it's a reminder that nothing has worked."

F. "I never thought we would say 'Brownie' wasn't so bad! Can you imagine what the Democrats would be saying if this was on George Bush's watch?"

F. "The president's vaunted coolness has been exposed as complacency."

F. "Good to take responsibility, but now what?"

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

**Democratic Political Insiders** Jill Alper, Brad Bannon, Dave Beattie, Andy Bechhoefer, Cornell Belcher, Matt Bennett, Mitchell W. Berger, Mike Berman, Stephanie Bosh, Paul Brathwaite, Donna Brazile, Mark Brewer, Ed Bruley, George Bruno, Deb Callahan, Bonnie Campbell, Bill Carrick, Guy Cecil, Martin J. Chavez, Tony Coelho, Larry Cohen, Jerry Crawford, Stephanie Cutter, Jeff Danielson, Peter Daou, Howard Dean, Jim Demers, Tad Devine, David DiMartino, Debbie Dingell, Monica Dixon, Patrick Dorton, Anita Dunn, Jeff Eller, Steve Elmendorf, Carter Eskew, Eric Eve, Vic Fazio, Peter Fenn, Scott Ferson, Jim Fleischmann, Tina Flournoy, Don Foley, Don Fowler, Vincent Frilico, Gina Glantz, Niles Godes, John Michael Gonzalez, Joe Grandmaison, Anna Greenberg, Stan Greenberg, Pat Griffin, Larry Grisolano, Michael Gronstal, Lisa Grove, Marcia Hale, Jill Hanauer, Dick Harpootlian, Paul Harstad, Laura Hartigan, Mike Henry, Karen Hicks, Leo Hindery, Jr., Harold Ickes, Marcus Jadotte, John Jameson, Steve Jarding, Jonathon Jones, Jim Jordan, Gale Kaufman, Lisa Kountoupes, Kam Kuwata, Celinda Lake, David Lang, Penny Lee, Chris Leahane, Jeff Link, Bill Lynch, Bob Maloney, Steve Marchand, Jim Margolis, Paul Maslin, Keith Mason, Terry McAuliffe, Susan McCue, Gerald McEntee, Tom McMahon, Phil McNamara, David Medina, Mark Mellman, John Merrigan, Steve Murphy, Janet Napolitano, David Nassar, Marcia Nichols, John Norris, Tom Ochs, Tom O'Donnell, Scott Parven, Jeffrey Peck, Debora Pignatelli, Tony Podesta, Jack Quinn, Larry Rasky, Bruce Reed, Mame Reiley, Steve Ricchetti, Will Robinson, Steve Rosenthal, David Rudd, John Ryan, Wendy Sherman, Terry Shumaker, Sean Sinclair, Phil Singer, Erik Smith, Doug Sosnik, Greg Speed, Darryl Stragow, Ken Strasma, Katrina Swett, Sarah Swisher, Jeffrey Trammell, Ed Turlington, Mike Veon, Rick Wiener, Bridgette Williams, James Williams, JoDee Winterhof, Brian Wolff, Jon Youngdahl and Jim Zogby.

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