

## **SLDN 2002**

CORPORATE ANNUAL REPORT

THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

My fellow Americans, ask not what  
your country can do for you – ask  
what you can do for your country.  
My fellow citizens of the world,  
ask not what America will do for  
you, but what together we can do  
for the freedom of man.

John F. Kennedy

As we begin our tenth year of legal aid and advocacy on behalf of those harmed by the military's anti-gay policies, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network continues to be a strong, visible proponent of equality and military readiness in our armed forces. Now, more than ever, our men and women in uniform are depending on SLDN's help.

A decade ago, SLDN emerged as the only resource for service members harmed by "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Today, we are still the sole national voice for those serving in silence. We are also the most trusted source – from the Pentagon to the public – on what really happens under the military's gay ban. As we mark the tenth anniversary of the ban, we do so with a new strategic plan to lift the ban and an unwavering commitment to our men and women in uniform.

During the past year, SLDN provided assistance to service members of all ages, ranks and backgrounds. We received 913 requests for assistance, a sharp increase from the 649 requests we answered in 2001. In 2003, we project receiving more than 1,100 such calls for help.

SLDN provided legal representation to more than a dozen Army linguists, many of them trained in Arabic, Farsi and Korean. When the military sought to end their careers because of their sexual orientation, **SLDN was there.**

We fought alongside Dr. Monica Hill. When the Air Force discharged Dr. Hill after she requested time to care for her dying partner of fourteen years, **SLDN was there.**

We stood with the parents of PFC Barry Winchell. When Major General Robert T. Clark was nominated for a prestigious promotion despite an anti-gay murder on his watch, **SLDN was there.**

SLDN's work changes hearts and minds. Recently, a Marine Corps memo surfaced, acknowledging the honorable service of gay Marines. The Coast Guard issued a Personnel Manual with strong anti-harassment language. And headlines across the country brought the debate on gays in the military to the forefront of our national conversations.

And, as part of our new strategic plan, SLDN has maintained an ambitious outreach and education campaign, targeting key leaders in all branches of the government.

We cannot, however, rest in the comfort of our accomplishments. The military continues to fire three people every day for being lesbian, gay or bisexual. Service members continue to endure unacceptably high incidents of harassment. Quite simply, as long as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" remains the law of the land, no one in our armed forces is free from the confines of federally sanctioned discrimination.

Over the past decade, we have made great strides on the road to freedom. With your continued support, our progress is assured.

The price of freedom is  
eternal vigilance.

Thomas Jefferson

## 2002: LIFTING THE BAN

THROUGH INNOVATIVE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION,  
WATCHDOG, OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

*Educating: Bringing Our Message to Key Decision Makers*

- ★ **Building Relationships.** In 2002, SLDN met with staff from more than 30 Congressional offices, both Republican and Democratic.
- ★ **Educating Leaders.** In October 2002, SLDN hired its first policy advocate. In our first three months on Capital Hill, we met with both Republican and Democratic leaders, including many on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

## SLDN ON THE FRONT LINES

**Among Senators who have met with SLDN during 2002:** Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R-RI), Sen. Hillary Rodham-Clinton (D-NY), Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD), Sen. Mark Dayton (D-MN), Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR).

**SLDN has also met with a number of House offices, including:** Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ), Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Rep. Marty Meehan (D-MA), House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT).

**Senator Russ Feingold, in a speech on the Senate Floor, decried the discriminatory tactics of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” citing SLDN’s work on the issue:** “The ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy has been, by most accounts, a failure. Homosexual military personnel continue to be harassed within all the branches of the Armed Forces. In fact, according to the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SDLN), an advocacy organization dedicated to aiding gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members who face discrimination in the armed services, in 2001 the armed services fired more than 1,250 gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans; more than any other year since 1987. Furthermore, since the initiation of the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy, more than 7,800 American service members have lost their jobs because of anti-gay sentiment.”

*Watching: Holding Feet to the Fire*

- ★ **Reporting the Facts.** SLDN published *Conduct Unbecoming: The Ninth Annual Report on “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”* Our policy report continues to be one of only a handful of human rights publications receiving national press coverage every year.
- ★ **Telling Their Stories.** SLDN publicized the Army’s discharge of lesbian, gay and bisexual linguists, all fired despite a critical shortfall of language specialists. Their stories moved from the front page to the halls of Congress, prompting key lawmakers and influential editorial boards to call for an end to the military’s gay ban.
- ★ **Exposing Lies.** SLDN discovered the Air Force Reserves were using obsolete recruiting forms that still asked recruits about their sexual orientation. After SLDN’s report, new forms were issued.

If there is anything which it is the duty of the whole people to never entrust to any hands but their own -- that thing is the preservation of their own liberties and institutions.

Abraham Lincoln

SLDN documented 802 incidents of anti-gay harassment in 2002. The Pentagon has failed to implement an Anti-Harassment Action Plan adopted in 2000.

The military continued a historical trend of fewer discharges during war time. DoD reported 906 gay-related discharges in 2002, down from 1273 in 2001.

Women comprised 26% of SLDN cases, and youth comprised 58%, representing a disproportionate impact on women and military personnel under 25.

#### *Changing Hearts & Minds: SLDN's Outreach & Education*

- ★ **Speaking Out.** MAJ Jeff Cleghorn, USA (Ret.), an SLDN staff attorney, spoke at the Army War College, the Army's training ground for future generals. MAJ Cleghorn spoke about "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" as part of a prestigious panel of military experts.
- ★ **Standing Out Online.** SLDN re-launched [www.sldn.org](http://www.sldn.org) to provide tools for grassroots organizing, legal information for service members and up-to-date news for SLDN supporters and members of the media. Our site receives thousands of visits every month.

#### *Organizing: Creating Change through Grassroots Activism*

- ★ **Rallying the Troops.** SLDN now has more than 45,000 members of *Frontlines*, our grassroots network of activists.
- ★ **Mobilizing for Action.** We distributed action alerts on topics ranging from the nomination of MG Clark to pressing the Pentagon for better anti-harassment programs.

### 2002: PROVIDING A CRITICAL LIFELINE

THROUGH FREE LEGAL SERVICES

#### *Advocating: Giving Voice to the Voiceless*

- ★ **Answering the Call.** SLDN received a record 913 calls for assistance during 2002, up from 649 in 2001 and 538 in 2000. Our legal team averaged more than 17 new requests every week.
- ★ **Providing A Lifeline.** We published critical information for service members mobilized for the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq. SLDN was an instrumental resource for questions regarding communication with domestic partners, survivor benefits and other issues important to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender service members.
- ★ **Standing with Families.** SLDN represented the family of Alan Schindler before the first parole hearing of the sailor convicted of killing Alan in 1993.
- ★ **Tracking Trends.** Our legal team enhanced our ability to track significant trends through a new legal database that streamlines legal services. The database tracks important information on the implementation of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in the field.

We're Americans and we have a rendezvous with destiny .... No people who have ever lived on this earth have fought harder, paid a higher price for freedom, or done more to advance the dignity of man than Americans.

Ronald Reagan

## THE MEN & WOMEN WE SERVE

**Specialist Brad Powell**, a North Carolina National Guardsman, was outed to his command after fellow soldiers learned that Powell is gay and is openly so in his civilian job. As a result of his outing, SPC Powell became the target of severe harassment and threats against his safety. SPC Powell received a written death threat on his vehicle windshield, overheard soldiers saying “the only thing a fag needs is a good fag bashing,” and heard an NCO state “a good way to decrease our nuclear arsenal is to put all fags on an island and nuke it.” SPC Powell was instructed by a drill sergeant – during hand grenade training – to pretend like “you’re blowing up a gay bar.”

After reporting these incidents to his command, discharge proceedings were initiated against SPC Powell, and his command attempted to give him a stigmatizing “general” discharge. SLDN fought to get SPC Powell the Honorable discharge he deserved, and to have those responsible for the misconduct held accountable.

**Captain Kira Zielinski** told her command in April 2001 that she is bisexual. In response, her chain of command conducted two improper investigations into her sexual orientation. During the investigations, the appointed inquiry officer improperly contacted members of Capt. Zielinski’s squadron who were not in her chain of command. He also intrusively questioned Capt. Zielinski’s mother about her daughter’s “propensity to engage in homosexual behavior in the future.” He then contacted a Marine Chaplain from whom Capt. Zielinski had sought counseling, seeking information Zielinski may have shared in confidence. The Chaplain called Zielinski a “sinner” with “un-Christian tendencies.”

The Marine Corps eventually threatened Capt. Zielinski with an “other than honorable” discharge. SLDN intervened and more than a year after learning of her sexual orientation, the Marine Corps awarded Capt. Zielinski the honorable discharge she deserved.

## 2002: PRESSING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

THROUGH POLICY ADVOCACY

*Improving Lives: Turning Policy Into Progress*

- ✧ **Derailing Discrimination.** SLDN waged an aggressive campaign to derail President Bush’s nomination of MG Robert T. Clark. This historic fight is the first time a general officer’s nomination has been criticized for reasons related to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” MG Clark was commanding general of Fort Campbell, Ky., when PFC Barry Winchell was murdered by fellow soldiers who believed he was gay.
- ✧ **Defining Acceptable Behavior.** We obtained changes to the Coast Guard Personnel Manual prohibiting anti-gay harassment. SLDN suggested the Coast Guard ensure its training materials contain clear and accurate information to illustrate prevention of harassment and to emphasize strong leadership and accountability.
- ✧ **Facilitating Change.** SLDN obtained a Marine Corps memo acknowledging non-compliance with “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The memo also adopted several SLDN recommendations to bring the Marines in compliance with the law and ordered renewed policy training.
- ✧ **Honoring Our Service.** We obtained a memo acknowledging the service of gay Marines and calling for retention of openly gay Marines in some circumstances. The Twenty-Nine Palms memo states, in part, that “homosexuals can and do make some of the best Marines,” and goes on to say that, “we hesitate to discharge Marines solely based on a statement they make about their sexual orientation.”

We look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want ... everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear ... anywhere in the world.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

## WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT SLDN

*“[SLDN] in effect does what the Pentagon should be doing and has a broader knowledge of actual conditions in the military than the military itself.”*

Thomas Oliphant, *The Boston Globe*, October 16, 2002

*“[SLDN] made me feel as though everything was going to be all right, at a time when I felt like my world . . . was collapsing around me.”*

An Operation Enduring Freedom Client, in an email to SLDN

NEWSPAPERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY JOINED  
SLDN’S CAMPAIGN TO TOPPLE THE MILITARY’S GAY BAN.

*“‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ is costly, un-American and destructive. Congress passed the law. And Congress ought to examine its impact on military readiness and on patriotic Americans’ lives.”*

Deb Price, *The Detroit News*, March 18, 2002

*“The military can’t afford these days to waste human resources or turn away the energy of qualified men and women who wish to help. [T]he policy weakens the nation’s readiness for war.”*

*The Washington Post*, Nov. 20, 2002

## 2002: SUPPORTING SERVICE MEMBER & VETERAN PRIDE

### *Recognizing Sacrifice*

- ★ **Telling Stories.** SLDN co-founded *Documenting Courage*, an online campaign to tell the stories of our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender troops. The campaign is administered with American Veterans for Equal Rights and the Human Rights Campaign.
- ★ **Honoring Service.** We honored World War II gay veterans at our annual “End the Witch Hunts” dinner in Washington. This was the first time gay WWII veterans have been recognized.

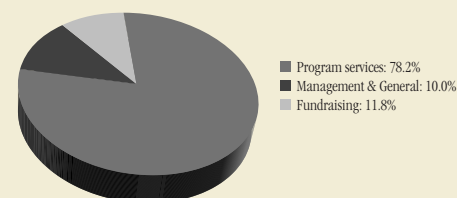
## 2002: STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

### *Building for the Future*

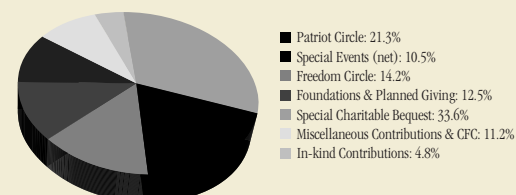
- ★ **Looking Ahead.** SLDN published a five-year strategic plan, *Freedom to Serve*, outlining the organization’s blueprint for repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The plan’s release received significant press attention, including in the *Associated Press* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.
- ★ **Welcoming Allies.** SLDN added new members to its honorary board. Master Chief Petty Officer Vincent W. Patton III, USCG (Ret.), BG Virgil A. Richard, USA (Ret.), MG Charles Starr, Jr., USAR (Ret.) and ADM Alan Steinman, MD, MPH, USCG (Ret.) bring a wealth of military experience to SLDN’s work.

## FY 2002 FINANCIALS

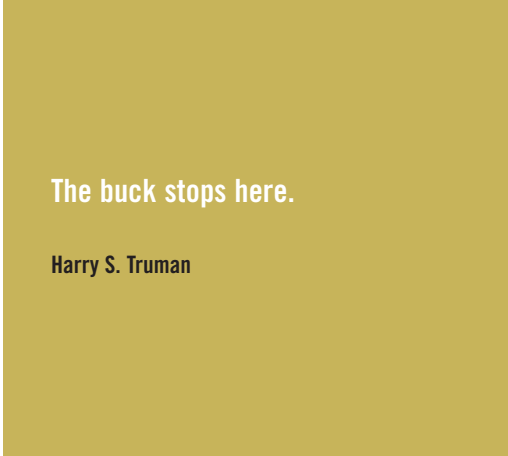
### 2002 Functional Expenses



### 2002 Income Percentage by Source







2002: OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to SLDN’s supporters for making a significant financial contribution to provide free legal services to men and women facing discrimination and harassment under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” and to advocate for repeal of the military’s gay ban.

This list has been checked for accuracy. If you see any errors or omissions, please call 202-328-3244, ext. 101.

2002 SLDN SUPPORTERS

**Patriot Circle.** The Patriot Circle is the highest level of annual financial commitment.

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<b>SUPPORT &amp; REVENUE</b>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>
Contributions & Grants	\$1,175	\$1,059	\$1,129
Special charitable bequest	772		
Special Events	370	339	302
Special Events - Direct Costs	(129)	(160)	(205)
In-kind Contributions	109	99	58
Other Income	4	10	13
Realized Gain (Loss) on Investments	(1)	(2)	1
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments		0	(1)
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT &amp; REVENUE</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>1,297</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>
Program services	1,179	1,135	917
Management & General	151	178	116
Fundraising	177	183	212
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>1,496</b>	<b>1,245</b>
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS	793	(151)	52
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	425	576	524
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$1,218</b>	<b>\$425</b>	<b>\$576</b>

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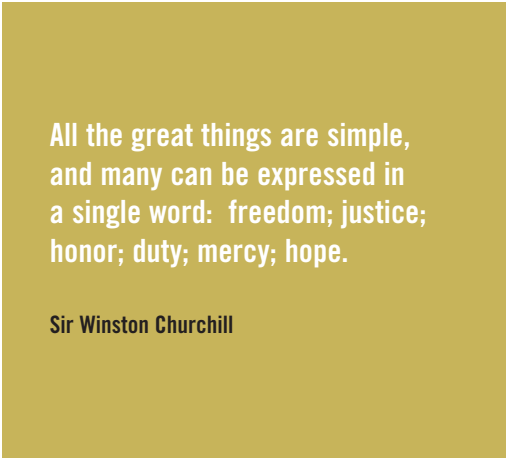
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