

Pentagon Giving Same-Sex Newlyweds Special Taxpayer-Funded Bonuses

A Supreme Court ruling earlier this year said the federal government must give equal treatment to same-sex couples who have legally “married.” But now the Pentagon wants to give a special, taxpayer-funded bonus to such couples—including a benefit that is not even available to heterosexual couples.

In the recent case of *United States v. Windsor*, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 to strike down as unconstitutional one section of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Section 3 of DOMA defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman for all purposes of federal law, regardless of a state’s definition of marriage.

On the face of it, all this ruling meant was that same-sex couples who 1) have already gotten legally “married” in a state or country that permits such “marriages” and 2) now live in a state that recognizes such couples as “married” must be granted the same benefits from the federal government that opposite-sex couples receive.

Now, however, the Department of Defense has gone much further. In a pair of memos released on Aug. 13, it announced that a service member who wants to enter a same-sex “marriage” but is posted more than 100 miles from a state that allows same-sex “marriages,” will be granted seven days of extra paid leave (10 days if posted outside the continental United States) just to travel to their wedding.

This special leave—only for destination weddings of homosexual couples—is above and beyond the regular annual leave granted to every service member. How much does this cost the American taxpayer? For 10 days’ work, a captain (with six years’

experience) earns \$1, in base pay alone—that's not even accounting for benefits like housing allowance, health care, etc. And this special taxpayer-funded leave is only available for same-sex "weddings"—heterosexuals need not apply!

This special treatment is not required by the repeal of the 1993 law on homosexuality in the military referred to as "don't ask, don't tell"; it is not required by the Supreme Court's *Windsor* decision; and it is fundamentally unequal and unfair. In a time of sequestration and severe cuts to the military, the Pentagon should be in the business of strengthening our troops, not in the business of same-sex "wedding" planning.

The National Defense Authorization Act for 2014, which would fund these unfair bonuses, now awaits action in the U.S. Senate. Contact your senators today, and urge them to amend the bill to remove any unequal treatment from it—in this case, a taxpayer-funded wedding bonus from the Pentagon afforded on the basis of sexual orientation.

Tony Perkins is president of the Washington, Family Research Council. He is a former member of the Louisiana legislature, where he served for eight years, and he is recognized as a legislative pioneer for authoring measures like the nation's first Covenant Marriage law.