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Contact: Ariana Bostian-Kentes, President and Co-Founder
ariana@milpfc.org, 571-354-MPFC (6732)

THE MILITARY PARTNERS AND FAMILIES COALITION APPLAUDS DEFENSE SECRETARY HAGEL'S PUSH FOR RECOGNITION OF ALL MILITARY FAMILIES

(Washington, D.C., November 1, 2013) – Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel cleared the barrier for all same-sex married couples in regards to accessing spousal benefits at National Guard facilities. The Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC) applauds Secretary Hagel's actions to ensure all military spouses are entitled to DoD ID cards, and the benefits that come with them.

By directive, September 3rd marked the day legally married same-sex military families became eligible for spousal benefits. Several states continued to refuse issuance of ID cards to same-sex spouses on National Guard facilities. "Today, I directed the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Frank Grass, to take immediate action to remedy this situation" stated Defense Secretary Hagel in his keynote speech at the Anti-Defamation League Centennial Dinner in New York.

MPFC President and Co-Founder, Ariana Bostian-Kentes, commented: **"The Military Partners and Families Coalition applauds Secretary Hagel's leadership and assertion of equality for all military families. This directive marks a monumental stance, in which our nation's military will treat same-sex military families with all the respect and equality that all military families are afforded under the law."**

Shanon Hartigan, wife of Major Pam Ellison of the Army National Guard, is pleased with this directive to create an inclusive military. "With the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act, Pam and I are so happy to finally be recognized as a true military family. To know that our family will receive all the benefits every other member of the National Guard would receive if something were to happen to Pam is very comforting. We have finally turned the corner on true equality within the military community, but it is a shame that there are States who are denying these same freedoms to all of our Guard family."

Bostian-Kentes noted that, "We are thrilled that our marriages will finally be considered equal and look forward to the day that marriage is accessible to everyone, no matter where their family is stationed."

Our military families are available for interviews.

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Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC) is a leading national organization providing support, resources, education, and advocacy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender military families. Founded in 2011 by a group of spouses and partners of active duty U.S. Armed Forces service members stationed in the U.S. and overseas, MPFC is a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C. For more information, go to www.milpfc.org or www.facebook.com/milpfc.