

Document #11

Letter from Office of the Assistant Secretary
of Defense RE: Benning Wentworth to Dr.
Franklin Kameny.

February 28, 1969

Description: The first page of a letter from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense regarding Benning Wentworth, an electronics technician whose eleven-year security clearance was revoked due to his homosexuality. The letter states the official position of the Defense Department on “homosexual conduct,” considering such behavior to be “sexual[ly] perverted” and thus justifiable grounds for termination. The Defense Department conducted several high-profile field hearings to strip Wentworth of his security clearance, asking pointed questions that included, “For how long have you been an active practicing homosexual?” and “At what age did you have your first homosexual experience? What did it consist of?” Dr. Franklin Kameny served as Wentworth’s counsel during the proceedings.



ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

28 FEB 1969

Dr. Franklin E. Kameny
5020 Cathedral Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Re: WENTWORTH, Benning
OSD No. 67-32

Dear Dr. Kameny:

This is in reply to your letter of February 20, 1969, addressed to the Chairman of the Appeal Board requesting clarification of the Board's recommendation that the Wentworth case be remanded for further proceedings.

The opinion of the Appeal Board, a copy of which was furnished you, clearly sets forth the basis for the Board's recommendation to the Director for Security Policy in this matter and that recommendation has been approved by the Director. It is our opinion that it requires no clarification.

Although we believe that it is abundantly clear in the record of this case, you again are informed that the Department of Defense does consider the particular homosexual conduct alleged in this case to constitute sexually perverted conduct. The Statement of Reasons issued by the Screening Board under date of May 2, 1967, makes this clear by its reference to "numerous perverted acts of a homosexual nature". Also, my letter of May 23, 1967, to Mr. Wentworth spells out in some detail the specific homosexual acts to which the Screening Board was referring in characterizing them as sexual perversion and as perverted acts of a homosexual nature.

Your argument to the Appeal Board that continuation of acts of sexual perversion is not relevant and that it is devoid of implications, seriousness, and significance, is considered not well taken. Similarly, your contention that the Appeal Board, on principle, should