

Air Force Sides With Chaplains Over 'Free-Thinking' Atheists' Complaint

Following a complaint by the “free-thinking” atheist group Freedom From Religion Foundation, and a subsequent appeal on behalf of the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty by the First Liberty Institute, the New Hampshire Air National Guard has announced it will continue its tradition of including prayer during military ceremonies.

Greg Heilshorn, the spokesman for the New Hampshire National Guard, made the following statement regarding the FFRF complaint:

“We don’t plan on responding to the FFRF. We haven’t had any formal complaints from our airmen internally regarding any concerns with prayers being said at various ceremonies. We will continue as we’ve done before. It’s our tradition.”

He added that chaplains are a “vital part” of the New Hampshire Air National Guard’s organization.

“We’re very pleased to see the New Hampshire Air National Guard do the right thing and continue their tradition, as the law clearly allows,” First Liberty Institute Senior Counsel Mike Berry said. “It is perfectly constitutional to offer invocations at military events and service members have every right to exercise their faith under the First Amendment.”

Click [here](#) to read the advisory letter First Liberty sent to the base commander at Pease Air National Guard Base on behalf of the Chaplain Alliance. In it, the organization explains how the law allows chaplains to offer invocations at military events.

“We commend Pease Air National Guard Base for standing strong and continuing their tradition,” Chaplain Alliance Executive Director Army Col. Ron Crews (ret.) said. “Chaplains and service members have the right to freely exercise their religious beliefs without fear of reprisal.” {eo}