

Franklin Graham Makes Prayer Call for Air Force Colonel Suspended for Christian Beliefs

Franklin Graham has called for prayer for the plight of United States Air Force Col. Leland Bohannon and to support the efforts of a prominent group of senators that has come to his defense after Bohannon was heavily penalized for sticking to his Christian values.

An experienced combat pilot who has been awarded the Bronze Star after serving in Afghanistan, Bohannon was recently suspended from command and it was recommended that he not be promoted to one-star general after he refused to publicly affirm the same-sex marriage of a retiring fellow service member. The retiring subordinate filed a formal Equal Opportunity complaint against Bohannon for his actions.

Senators Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, James Lankford Mike Lee, Roy Blunt, Roger Wicker, James Inhofe and John Kennedy each wrote letters to Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson calling for the Air Force to reverse the decision and remove any unfavorable notations from Bohannon's record.

"I thank them for taking action, and I hope President Donald Trump takes note of what has happened here," Graham said on Facebook. "Join me in praying for Col. Bohannon. Let him know that you support him and appreciate him standing by his convictions."

Cruz asked Wilson to consider Bohannon's service record and the risks he undertook to protect the freedoms of American citizens.

“Our country was founded by people who risked everything,” Cruz said. “The American military embodies this heritage, and they shouldn’t have to surrender their fundamental religious liberties to do it. Col. Bohannon did exactly what we expect our heroes to do: he found a smart solution, under pressure, that balanced his religious liberties with the honor that was due the service member. He deserves to be lauded for his quick, compassionate thinking—not threatened with a potentially career-ending action.”

The Family Research Council released this statement in support of Bohannon:

“[The DOJ’s religious freedom] memorandum relies on current law—the First Amendment, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), and Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) —which all protect religious freedom in the military, and thus protect Col Bohannon. Indeed, DODI requires an accommodation to be granted unless a military interest overrides it. All of these authorities clearly require the government to protect Col Bohannon’s religious freedom by not forcing him to personally sign the certificate.”

More than 23,400 people have signed a Family Research Council petition in support of Col. Bohannon. {eoa}