

Military Chaplains May Perform Same-Sex Marriages on Bases

The Pentagon has decided that military chaplains will be allowed to perform same-sex unions on military installations despite the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA, which, for federal purposes, defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Now, Christian values groups are up in arms.

Tim Wildmon, president of the American Family Association, contends that the decision clearly violates the spirit of DOMA, because the result will be federal employees and facilities funded by American taxpayers to perform ceremonies that have no legal recognition under federal law.

“This is just more craven capitulation to the homosexual agenda. While conservative chaplains aren’t being forced to perform same-sex marriages yet, it will only be a matter of time before they are tagged as homophobic bigots and forced to choose between their values and a military career,” Wildmon says. “We need courageous leaders in Washington who will work to reinstate the ban on homosexuality in the armed services while there is still room for people of faith.

The Family Research Council also criticized the DOD for a pair of memos giving approval for same-sex “weddings” to be conducted on military bases, and by military chaplains whether on or off base.

The memos resembled the guidance offered by the Navy’s Chief of Chaplains last April—guidance which was suspended less than a month later after a public outcry by critics who, like FRC, argued that such a policy would violate DOMA. DOMA forbids the

federal government from recognizing anything other than the union of one man and one woman as a marriage.

The new memos also directly contradict language, the so-called "military DOMA" amendment, which was adopted by the House of Representatives in the Defense Authorization bill. That bill currently awaits action in the Senate.

"It is outrageous that only 10 days after repeal of the law against homosexuality in the Armed Forces, the Defense Department is already pushing the military further down the slippery slope," says FRC President Tony Perkins. "The repeal law passed by the lame-duck Congress last year said nothing about authorizing same-sex 'weddings' on military bases or by military chaplains."