

Military Chaplains Seek Protection for Troops Who Oppose Homosexuality

✖ Military chaplains are asking for reassurances that troops who openly object homosexuality will not be punished once the “don’t ask don’t tell” policy is lifted.

Chaplains from 21 religious agencies, including representatives from the Southern Baptist Convention, the Anglican Church in North America, and the National Association of Evangelicals, sent a letter Monday to the military’s chief of chaplains. The letter, prepared with assistance from the Alliance Defense Fund, asks for help in encouraging Congress and the Department of Defense to provide protections for military members who discuss their opinions on homosexuality as a sin.

“This is already an assault and a challenge on individual conscience and some soldiers may think it’s forcing them to abandon their religious beliefs or being marginalized for holding to those beliefs,” Douglas E. Lee, a retired Army brigadier general and chaplain, whose signature was the first on the letter, told the Associated Press.

“Service members should not be denied the very constitutional liberties they volunteered to defend,” Daniel Blomberg, legal counsel for the ADF, said. “If this

government truly cares about protecting religious liberties as it says it does, why has it been afraid to put it in writing?"

"We strongly encourage the adoption of broad, clear, and strong protections for conscience," the letter states. "Service members should know that chaplains' ministry and their own rights of conscience remain protected everywhere military necessity has placed them."

Although previous reports have said military chaplains will still be able to preach the wrongness of homosexuality, the letter seeks confirmation that chaplains and troops will be free to express their views outside chapels.