

Obama's Pick to Lead the Army Wages War on Religious Liberty

How serious is President Obama about addressing the crises in his military? Not very, if his latest nomination is any indication. With the troops already fighting an internal war over recruitment and retention, the president wants to raise the stakes by appointing openly gay Eric Fanning as Army Secretary.

Fanning, whom conservatives remember from the Phillip Monk controversy, has spent his last several years lobbying for open transgenderism in the ranks as Air Force Undersecretary and later as the Defense Secretary's Chief of Staff. His efforts paid off when both bosses, Deborah Lee James and Ash Carter, publicly supported the idea, insisting that "times change."

Well, times may have changed, but the risks have not. Since 2010, Americans have had a front-row seat to the consequences of the White House's social engineering: sky-high sexual assaults, religious intolerance, record-low morale, and widespread job dissatisfaction. And Fanning's confirmation would almost certainly take the military to a moral point of no return. With the power to set policy, Fanning, who has already pushed the social envelope, would have the potential to do even more harm to military readiness and recruitment.

As LGBT's OUTServe bragged, "Having an openly gay individual in high level positions within the Department of Defense helps to set the tone at the top and provides an opportunity to bring better understanding about both the shared and the unique needs of [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals] in the military and their families." At a time

when global tensions are high, the Army needs a proven leader – not a proven activist. When Eric Fanning worked for the Air Force, a branch with one of the worst records on religious liberty, Family Research Council directly appealed to him to stop the faith-based persecution of servicemen like Master Sergeant Phillip Monk. Instead of interceding, Fanning brushed off the concerns about religious hostility in the military and refused to lift a finger to help Monk.

No thanks to Fanning, Sergeant Monk was not only vindicated by the Air Force – but honored at his retirement. As Secretary of the Army, can we expect this same indifference to religious liberty – or worse, the aggressive censorship of anyone with conservative views? Governor Mike Huckabee, who has never shied away from speaking out on these issues, blasted the administration for caring more about its politically correct legacy than America's national security. "It's clear President Obama is more interested in appeasing America's homosexuals than honoring America's heroes... Obama is so obsessed with pandering to liberal interest groups he's nominated an openly gay civilian to run the Army. Homosexuality is not a job qualification."

Like us, Governor Huckabee knows what danger lies ahead for our already fragile troops. "The U.S. military is designed to keep Americans safe and complete combat missions, not to conduct social experiments." If the administration is interested in letting people serve openly, how about Christians? Or chaplains? Instead, the White House seems to be signaling even darker days ahead for the men and women who proudly wear their country's uniform.

Fortunately, the Senate will have an opportunity to weigh in on the president's pick. You can help by encouraging your leaders to get honest answers about what Fanning plans to do to protect the rights of U.S. service members around the world. What kind of policy guidance would he give so that commanders don't discriminate against men and women of faith?

For now, the nomination of an activist like Fanning is just another indication that the administration is too consumed with sexualizing the troops to bother with military readiness. Under this commander-in-chief, serving your country may be important – but not as important as serving his extreme agenda.