

Bible Verse Cadets Call Out Air Force Academy for Violating Constitutional Rights

The Restore Military Religious Freedom Coalition comprised of 24 groups led by the Family Research Council and including legal groups such as Alliance Defending Freedom, Liberty Counsel, the Liberty Institute and Thomas More Law Center, announced Thursday that they stand ready to offer assistance to any Air Force Academy cadet who faces repercussions for writing a Bible verse on a hallway whiteboard that has been designated by the Academy for both official and personal use.

Earlier this week, a Bible verse (Galatians 2:20) was removed from the Air Force Academy after a complaint by an anti-Christian group. On Wednesday reports surfaced that cadets are protesting the censorship by writing Bible verses on other campus whiteboards. Last year, the Restore Military Religious Freedom Coalition launched a website, www.restoremilitaryreligiousfreedom.com, to support the religious liberties of America's men and women in uniform.

Several members of the Restore Military Religious Freedom Coalition released the following statements in support of the cadets and religious liberty:

"This reflects that the cadets understand the Constitution and have a greater faith in the Constitution than their leaders. They are freely exercising their constitutional rights that they will be defending upon graduation," said retired Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin, Family Research Council's executive vice president.

Michael Berry, Liberty Institute's senior counsel and director of Military Affairs, added: "This is a blatant violation of

Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) and the Constitution. But the Air Force seems to think that AFI 1-1's neutrality towards religion requirement means forbidding religious freedom. If that's true, then I suggest the Air Force officials read DODI , which supersedes AFI 1-1 and guarantees religious freedom for all service members."

"Suppressing religion is wrong whether it is done behind an Iron Curtain or in a dorm hallway. Certainly such raw anti-religious discrimination has no place in America's Air Force," noted Gary McCaleb, chief solicitor and executive vice president for Strategy Implementation at Alliance Defending Freedom.

Mathew Staver, Liberty Counsel chairman, said: "This latest incident at the United States Air Force Academy reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of religious freedom. Not only is the notion that cadets have to abandon or hide their faith as a requisite of military service not supported by law, it is actually discriminatory to brave men and women of faith that desire to serve their country."

Richard Thompson, president and chief counsel, Thomas More Law Center, concluded: "From the Revolutionary War to the present day, military leaders have understood that in times of danger and death, no physical courage can sustain the soldier other than Divine help. This understanding prompted Article 6 of the military Code of Conduct, which emphasizes a soldier's personal responsibilities for his actions and trust in God.

"Thus, the actions of the Air Force to restrict this cadet's free speech and the free exercise of religion because it offends some, is not only unconstitutional, but conflicts with the military's own understanding of the importance of religion to our military men and women placed in harm's way," he said.

To read "A Clear and Present Danger," Family Research Council's comprehensive report on religious suppression in the

military, [click here](#).