



PO Box 151353  
Alexandria, VA 22315  
[www.chaplainalliance.org](http://www.chaplainalliance.org)  
(571) 293-2427

CHAPLAIN ALLIANCE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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Contact CHAPLAIN ENDORSERS at [info@chaplainalliance.org](mailto:info@chaplainalliance.org), or call 571-293-2427

## Activists call for ouster of chaplains from military

**WASHINGTON** — Some activists have called for the ouster of chaplains from the military in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on marriage Friday. The calls specifically target chaplains who maintain a sincerely held religious belief that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman.

“Chaplains have been an integral part of our military since our nation’s founding,” said Chaplain (COL) Ron Crews, USA Retired, executive director of Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty. “Many of our brave men and women in uniform want and need spiritual guidance to do their jobs. That’s why George Washington instituted the military chaplaincy at the outset of this country. Our service members today put their lives on the line no less than then, which means that, each time they put on the uniform, they must face the question of their own mortality. The strain of prolonged combat takes its toll on even the toughest veteran.”

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a veteran commits suicide every 65 minutes; 22 individuals take their lives every day.

“This is a tragedy,” Crews said. “That is why the chaplaincy is indispensable to our nation’s military. America’s service members stand at the ready to potentially make the ultimate sacrifice in theaters of combat far from home so that we may enjoy our freedoms here at home.”

In its decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* last week, the U.S. Supreme Court mandated same-sex marriage across all 50 states. While the 5-4 majority opinion did note that the constitutional right to religious liberty is still an important and respected principle, the court fell dangerously short of protecting the free exercise of religion.

“Nonetheless, nothing in that decision can seriously be taken to require chaplains to be removed from the military,” Crews added. “While some call for their ouster from the military, the reality is that we owe it to our fighting men and women to provide them with the spiritual guidance and encouragement they need when facing life and death situations to defend the very freedoms we cherish—freedoms protected by the same people who instituted the chaplaincy.”

***[The Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty](http://www.chaplainalliance.org) is an organization of chaplain endorsers, the faith groups that provide chaplains for the U.S. military and other agencies needing chaplains. The endorsers in the Chaplain Alliance speak for more than 2,600 chaplains serving the armed forces.***

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