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*PURSUING a nation where all chaplains, and those whom they serve, freely exercise their God-given and constitutionally protected religious liberties without fear of reprisal.*

## On CALL

### Lifting of the ban on service of transgender individuals in the Armed Forces imminent

The following are excerpts from a coalition letter signed by Chaplain Alliance For Religious Liberty Executive Director CH (COL) Ron Crews, USA (Ret.) sent to Congressman Mac Thornberry and Senator John McCain, chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees respectively.

You can read the letter in its entirety at [chaplainalliance.org/news](http://chaplainalliance.org/news)

We, the undersigned individuals and organizations, write to express our concerns about the Obama Administration's plan to lift current restrictions on military service by those persons claiming to be transgendered. The Administration is putting

this new policy into effect for ideological and political reasons without regard to the effects it will have on military readiness and combat effectiveness. We believe these policy changes will impair the operational capabilities of our nation's armed forces.

[...]

Profound questions about military readiness arise when dealing with individuals who are undergoing psychological counseling and medical treatment. Yet these significant changes are being effected *without any Congressional guidance or direction*. The Administration's aim is not increased military effectiveness. Rather, it is advancing its agenda

to undermine the basic biological understanding of male-female sexual identity and coercively advance its radical interpretation of "gender" by altering all military institutions whole cloth.

[...]

In closing, we believe Congress needs to investigate these proposed policy changes, and determine the effects they will have on the military readiness of the U.S. armed services. Thereafter, legislation may be needed to correct actions taken by the Administration.

#### Did you know?

Chaplain Alliance (CALL) speaks on behalf of over half of the nation's uniformed chaplains. CALL exists to ensure that chaplains can defend and provide for the freedom of religion and conscience that the Constitution guarantees all chaplains and those whom they serve.



## In The News:

- March 2016: CALL signed a coalition letter thanking Senate Republican leadership for their announcement that the Senate will not act on a replacement for Justice Scalia until after the newly elected President has the opportunity to make that nomination, and it urges them to stand firm in the resolve to await the selection of the next President and decline to hold any hearings or votes on any nominee put forth in the last months of President Obama's final term.

- February 2016: A Bible and Bible verse were removed from a Prisoner Of War/Missing In Action display inside an Ohio Veteran's Administration clinic after the Military Religious Freedom Foundation complained.

- February 2016: The head of a watchdog group said the major general who leads the Air Force Recruiting Service has reversed his decision to remove a video in which a Protestant chaplain spoke of his role as a minister who brought someone to Christ during a deployment to Iraq. We commend the general's decision.

- February 2016: CALL signed a coalition letter asking that House Republican leadership schedule a vote on the *First Amendment Defense Act* ("FADA," H.R. 2802/S. 1598), sponsored by Congressman Raul Labrador (R-ID) and Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), for early this year.

- December 2015: Alliance Defending Freedom and CALL filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the U.S. Court Of Appeals For The Armed Forces in support of a Marine court-martialed for posting a bible verse in her workplace.

- December 2015: Following reports that cadets initiated and led a voluntary prayer at two football games, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation sent a threatening letter to the Air Force Academy command to demand that it put an end to this exercise of First Amendment freedoms. We commend the Academy's decision to allow the players to pray.



## Burial At Sea: Providing Hope and Closure

**U.S.S. Makin Island** — It was the most beautiful funeral I have ever led. Watching the final committal from the safety of the higher position, the stern gate, which normally is lowered for Amphibious Assault Vehicles, was now being opened to say farewell to a beloved shipmate one last time.

Moving along the waters just outside of San Diego at just 4 knots, the ocean sprayed up between the small gap made when the gate opens, surrounding the casket with a halo of sea spray and prismatic color in the morning sunlight. The sailors came to attention rendering one final silent salute as the water slowly enveloped the casket. One more wash of salt water gently swept over and pulled the casket out to sea. As it tilted up and peacefully sank into the deep, every sailor present fought back more than one salty tear.

It was at that moment I realized that all the time, energy, and effort in planning, coordinating and rehearsing was worth every minute. This was even more special to us because this was family. This was closure for a crew who had been mourning the loss of a well-known, well-loved, influential Master Chief who just a few months before was leading and mentoring sailors on board this very vessel.

Somehow through this ceremony, people heard the message of hope of eternal life taken from Romans 8. Somehow, no matter the beliefs of those present, seeing their brother in arms laid to rest enabled those present to move forward. Each one left a little more ready to serve with the confidence that in death just as in life, there is someone who cares. As a US Navy chaplain, I am honored to help bring this into the lives of those who sacrifice so much for our nation.

Very respectfully,  
Aaron C. Carlton  
Chaplain  
LCDR CHC USN

Article originally appeared on [CBAmerica.org](http://CBAmerica.org), founding member of CALL

Contact the On CALL Editor for fact checking all stories in this newsletter:  
[info@chaplainalliance.org](mailto:info@chaplainalliance.org)