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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **NAVY THREATENS TO END 19-YEAR CAREER OF DECORATED CHAPLAIN WHO SERVED NAVY SEAL TEAMS**

Liberty Institute Defends Chaplain Wes Modder's Exemplary Record of Military Service  
and His Constitutional Right of Religious Expression

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**GOOSE CREEK, SC, March 9, 2015**—Today, Liberty Institute responds to the Navy's threatened punishment of Chaplain Wes Modder, a decorated Navy chaplain and former Marine. Modder has been called "the best of the best" and a "national asset" with "charismatic leadership and sound judgment" by his former Marine and Navy SEAL commanders. The Navy is threatening Chaplain Modder with career-ending punishment because of the faith-based views he expressed in private counseling sessions with sailors. The Navy has requested that Modder be barred from promotion, fired from his job as chaplain, and brought before a military Board of Inquiry, where he could be forced out of the Navy. Modder is only months away from his twentieth anniversary of active military service.

Modder previously served as the Force chaplain for Naval Special Warfare Command. He has deployed overseas multiple times during the War on Terror, including in support of **DEVGRU** and other SEAL teams in high-profile operations around the globe. He has received the highest possible ratings by his former commanders, who have commanded **DEVGRU**, SEAL Teams, and Naval Special Warfare Command. *Follow this link to read more about Modder's case, his stellar record, and his recommendations:* <http://www.libertyinstitute.org/modderfacts>

In its response letter, Liberty Institute attorneys assert that censoring Chaplain Modder's religious expression is unconstitutional religious discrimination. They note that federal law and military regulations forbid the Navy from punishing a chaplain because they act according to their faith. Liberty Institute also requests that the Navy allow Chaplain Modder to return to serving his sailors according to his faith. *Follow this link to review Liberty Institute's response letter:*

"Chaplain Modder is a military hero who has put his life on the line to serve our nation. No chaplain should ever be punished for ministering to others according to their faith. That is the chaplain's job; it's exactly what they are supposed to do," said Liberty Institute President and CEO Kelly Shackelford.

Mike Berry, Liberty Institute's Director of Military Affairs, said, "The Navy is attacking a military hero who put his life on the line to serve our country – first as a Marine, then as a chaplain. They've given Chaplain Modder a choice: your religious freedom or your career. If the military can punish him for his views, what is the point of even pretending we have religious liberty in the military?"

**About Liberty institute**

Liberty Institute is the largest nonprofit legal organization in the nation dedicated solely to defending religious liberty in America. Liberty Institute protects freedom of religious expression in our schools, churches, military, and throughout the public arena. For more information, visit [www.LibertyInstitute.org](http://www.LibertyInstitute.org).