

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, RETIRED MILITARY GENERALS AND OTHERS ASK SUPREME COURT TO TAKE *STERLING* CASE

Washington – In an unusual occurrence in Supreme Court practice, seven parties have filed amicus briefs with the Supreme Court at the cert stage, asking the Court to take the case of *Sterling v. United States*.

“It’s rare for a Supreme Court case to receive a single amicus brief at this stage, let alone seven,” Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty, says. “We’re blown away to see such a broad range of parties of such high caliber weigh in on this case to support religious freedom.”

The *amici*, who each have a vested interest in the outcome of the case, encourage the court to review *Sterling v. U.S.* They include:

- **Dr. Simcha Goldman**, an Orthodox Jew, who was the plaintiff in the historic Supreme Court case of *Goldman v. Weinberger* (1986), where he sought the right to wear a yarmulke while in uniform. His case, which was lost in a 5-4 decision, was the last military religious freedom case heard by the Supreme Court. Dr. Goldman urges the court to protect religious minorities in the military. ([Read the Goldman brief](#))
- **Lieutenant Colonel Kamal S. Kalsi**, U.S. Army Reserve, the first Sikh member of the Armed Forces given a religious accommodation to serve on active duty with a beard and turban, argues that the lower court’s ruling risks creating obstacles preventing people of faith from serving in the military. ([Read the Kalsi brief](#))
- **Thirteen retired military generals** argue that religious freedom is vital to the military and should be protected. ([Read the generals’ brief](#))
- **Fourteen States’ Attorneys General** say the lower court misapplied RFRA and argue that how the court interprets RFRA will directly impact service members who are citizens of their states. ([Read the Attorneys General’s brief](#))
- **Religious Freedom Restoration Act expert Thomas Berg** filed a brief on behalf of multiple religious and civil liberties organizations, including the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and many others. ([Read the brief](#))
- **Foundation for Moral Law** argues the historical significance and importance of religious freedom in the military. ([Read the Foundation’s brief](#))
- **Thirty-six Members of Congress** argue that the lower court’s interpretation of the Congress-authored RFRA is not consistent with the law’s text and purpose. They urge the court to review the *Sterling* case. ([Read the Members’ brief](#))

The *Sterling* case began when a United States Marine, LCpl Monifa Sterling, was court-martialed for refusing an order to remove a Bible verse from her workspace. Since Sterling invoked the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in her defense, the question before the Supreme Court is how RFRA should be interpreted to protect individuals when the government burdens a person's religious exercise. The outcome has the potential to determine the extent of religious freedom for all Americans, not just those serving in the military. ([Read an explainer on the case](#))

First Liberty Institute, along with former solicitor general of the United States Paul Clement of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, represents LCpl Sterling in her appeal to the Supreme Court.

“Voices in the military, in the church, in religious minorities, and from across the nation are uniting to ask the Supreme Court to protect religious freedom,” Shackelford says. “We hope the Supreme Court will heed their requests and accept this historic religious freedom case.”

[Read more at SterlingFacts.com](#)

[View the Supreme Court page on *Sterling v. United States*](#)

#

About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Kassie Dulin, Director of Legal Communications for First Liberty Institute. Email: kdulin@firstliberty.org, Direct: 972-941-9575, Cell: 214-542-4334.