

## **FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE APPEALS HISTORIC MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CASE TO THE SUPREME COURT**

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**WASHINGTON, DC** –First Liberty Institute and nationally renowned litigator Paul Clement announce they have filed a petition for writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court, asking the Supreme Court to accept the case of *Sterling v. United States*. The case centers around the question of how the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) applies to both members of the military and the American public.

[Read the brief](#)

The case began when U.S. Marine Lance Corporal (LCpl) Monifa Sterling was court-martialed for refusing an order to remove a Bible verse she had posted in her workplace. Despite invoking RFRA as a defense, Sterling was convicted. Sterling appealed, and in April 2016, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (CAAF), the nation’s highest military court, heard her case.

In August, the court issued an opinion upholding the conviction on the basis that the order to remove the Bible verse did not “substantially burden” Sterling’s religious exercise. The effect of the CAAF’s ruling means that RFRA does not fully protect religious freedom for military members. First Liberty Institute, along with Paul Clement, represented LCpl Sterling at her hearing before the CAAF in April.

“This important case warrants the Supreme Court’s attention in order to ensure that our service members get the same protection for their religious liberty as civilians in the majority of circuits,” says Paul Clement, former Solicitor General of the United States and now a partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP.

“The CAAF set a terrible and shameful precedent with its opinion, jeopardizing the religious rights of every single man and woman in military service,” Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty Institute, says. “We are asking the Supreme Court to hear this historic case and protect the constitutional rights of all of our service members.”

“Our service members give up many freedoms to serve, but religious freedom is never one of them,” Mike Berry, Senior Counsel and Director of Military Affairs for First Liberty Institute, says. “Their right to free religious expression should be protected. We’re asking the Supreme Court to uphold that right.”

Read more about the case [SterlingFacts.com](http://SterlingFacts.com)

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**About First Liberty Institute**

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

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