



*Photo of United States Marine Corps Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling
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Read more about the case and access photos at SterlingFacts.com

Supreme Court Declines to Review Case of Marine Court-Martialed Over Bible Verse

Military court's decision below deals huge blow to religious freedom in the Military

WASHINGTON, DC—June 5, 2017— Today, the Supreme Court of the United States declined to review First Liberty Institute's appeal in the case of Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling, a U.S. Marine convicted at court-martial for refusing an order to remove an inspirational Bible verse from her workstation.

"Because the Supreme Court did not decide to review the case, the travesty below by the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces will now stand," said Kelly Shackelford, President, CEO & Chief Counsel for First Liberty. "The military court's outrageous decision means federal judges and military officials can strip our service members of their constitutional rights just because they don't think someone's religious beliefs are important enough to be protected. Our service members deserve better."

Lance Corporal Sterling was convicted at a court-martial after she refused an order to remove a paraphrase of an inspirational Bible verse ("No weapon formed against me shall prosper" from Isaiah 54:17). Sterling had posted the verse in her workspace and reposted it after her supervisor

removed and threw it in the trash. Trial evidence revealed that other Marines were permitted to display personal items in their workspaces.

After a trial court ruled against Sterling, she appealed to the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals, but the appeals court also ruled against her. First Liberty Institute stepped in and appealed Sterling's case to the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces — the nation's highest military court. On August 10, 2016, the CAAF ruled against Sterling. First Liberty appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court on December 23, 2016.

Shackelford added, "We had hoped the Court would review this case, but we will now work even harder to ensure our nation's brave service members do not lose their religious freedom."

In the past five years, First Liberty's Military Affairs Division has successfully resolved five major matters vindicating the religious rights of service members and their families against violations of those rights. First Liberty is currently representing other service members.

Read more about the case at SterlingFacts.com.

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About First Liberty Institute

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

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