



PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. AIR FORCE STALLING, WITHHOLDING INFORMATION ABOUT ASSAULT OF VETERAN FIRST LIBERTY LAWSUIT ALLEGES

Religious Liberty Law Firm Files FOIA Lawsuit to Obtain Investigation Into Assault of Veteran Forcibly Removed From Retirement Ceremony

PLANO, TX. – Today, First Liberty Institute filed a lawsuit against Department of the Air Force alleging violations of the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) for wrongfully withholding the results of an investigation from First Liberty and the American public. The Air Force’s refusal to turn over the results of its investigation has caused undue delay to First Liberty’s representation of its client, thirty-three year Air Force veteran Oscar Rodriguez, as he seeks justice for an incident that occurred over one year ago.

“The Air Force is clearly hiding something,” Mike Berry, Director of Military Affairs for First Liberty Institute, says. “Federal law requires the government to make a determination within 20 days of a FOIA request, yet it’s been over 200 days and we haven’t received anything but delays. Whatever the Air Force is hiding, it must be really bad for them.”

During a retirement ceremony held in April 2016 at Travis Air Force base, at which Rodriguez—himself a retired Airman—was an invited guest, multiple, uniformed Airmen assaulted Rodriguez and forcibly dragged him away for giving a speech that included the word “God.”

In June 2016, First Liberty sent a demand letter to the Air Force claiming multiple legal and constitutional violations as a result of the incident. Two days later, then-Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James ordered the Air Force Inspector General to conduct an investigation into the incident. The Air Force actually conducted two separate investigations—one addressing First Liberty’s First Amendment claims, the other addressing its Fourth and Fifth Amendment claims—but it has only released the First Amendment investigation. Despite multiple requests, the Air Force has refused to release the investigation into First Liberty’s other claims, which the Air Force completed on May 13, 2016.

Read more about the case and watch a video of the incident at FirstLiberty.org/Rodriguez

About First Liberty Institute

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

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