

## **Religious Liberty Prevails: U.S. Army Official Clears Chaplain and Assistant of Outrageous “Dereliction of Duty” Charge**

*General invalidates recommendations to punish chaplain who followed military regulations*

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**FT. BRAGG, NC**—Today, the United States Army announced that it has rejected the findings of an investigation, and will abandon charges of “dereliction of duty” against First Liberty Institute clients Chaplain Scott Squires and Chaplain Assistant, SSG Kacie Griffin. An earlier Army report recommended Squires be disciplined for following the rules of the Army and taking three business days to reschedule a marriage retreat he was prohibited by his denomination from facilitating.

“We are grateful that the Army has rejected and abandoned these baseless charges,” said Mike Berry, Deputy General Counsel and Director of Military Affairs to First Liberty. “The United States military is no place for anti-religious hostility against its own military chaplains. Chaplains like Scott Squires assistant Kacie Griffin do not have to give up their First Amendment rights in order to serve their fellow soldiers.”

The complaint that triggered an investigation of Chaplain Squires alleged that he discriminated against a same-sex couple when he quickly rescheduled a marriage retreat his chaplain endorsing agency, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), prevents its chaplains from facilitating. Despite Department of Defense (DOD) regulations that require chaplains to adhere to their endorsers’ rules and religious tenets and overlooking statements clearing Chaplain Squires of any wrongdoing, an Army investigator recommended that Squires be found guilty of “dereliction of duty,” a court martial offense that could have resulted in up to six months in military prison.

“I look forward to being able to focus on continuing my career serving my fellow soldiers,” said Chaplain Squires. “I am eternally grateful to First Liberty for covering my six and fighting to restore my religious liberty.”

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### **About First Liberty Institute**

[First Liberty Institute](http://www.firstliberty.org) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

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