

Judge Allows Religious Liberty Firm to Join in Defense of Bible on POW/MIA Remembrance Table at New Hampshire VA Hospital

First Liberty Institute represents veterans organization that owns and maintains display at Manchester, New Hampshire VA Medical Center

Concord, NH—A federal judge today granted First Liberty Institute’s motion to intervene on behalf of its client, the Northeast POW/MIA Network (the Network), in a lawsuit filed against the inclusion of a donated Bible on a POW/MIA Remembrance Table owned and maintained by the Network at the Manchester Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The judge also allowed the case to move forward.

“Our clients, who are all patriots from the New England area, sacrificed too much for this country to let some activists from thousands of miles away bully them,” said Michael Berry, Director of Military Affairs and Chief of Staff for First Liberty Institute. “The Supreme Court recently upheld the constitutionality of religious displays with historic roots such as those commonly found in VA facilities. First Liberty will fight alongside the VA to make sure the Bible stays.”

A local veteran, supported by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), filed the lawsuit earlier this year. The lawsuit claimed that by allowing a private display to include a Bible at the medical center, the VA had violated the First Amendment’s prohibition on the “establishment of religion.” Attorneys with the VA and First Liberty argue that because the display is owned and maintained by a private organization, it is private speech, and therefore protected by the First Amendment.

In July, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it updated and clarified its policies “permitting religious literature, symbols and displays at VA facilities to protect religious liberty for Veterans and families while ensuring inclusivity and nondiscrimination” after First Liberty sent a letter urging the VA to issue such a clarification.

The Bible included in the display at the MVAMC was donated by former U.S. Army Air Corps Technical Sergeant (TSgt) Herman “Herk” Streitburger, of Bedford, NH, who was held captive in a German Prisoner of War camp during World War II.

First Liberty is working on behalf of the Network with attorney Jeremy Eggleton of Orr & Reno, P.A

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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.

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNiel at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.