



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

National VA Chaplain Center  
Building 33  
100 Emancipation Drive  
Hampton, VA 23667

Attn: Mr. Michael Berry, Chief of Staff/Director of Military Affairs  
First Liberty  
2001 West Plano Parkway  
Suite 1600  
Plano, TX 75075

Dear Mr. Berry,

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Robert Wilkie with a request to issue a policy applicable to all VA Facilities that permits the inclusion of a Bible in POW/MIA Remembrance Displays. Serious consideration has been given to your request. I have been asked to respond as the National Director of VA Chaplaincy.

On July 3, 2019, VA issued a rewrite of both VHA Directive 1111(1), "Spiritual and Pastoral Care in the Veterans Health Administration", and VA Directive 0022, "Religious Symbols in VA Facilities". The new policy states that "religious symbols may be included in a passive display in public areas of VA facilities."

Our directive rewrites are designed to uphold the First Amendment to the United States Constitution which ensures that the government does not establish one state religion as well as ensures the free exercise of religious faith by all people. We also want to respect that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits the government from "abridging the freedom of speech" of private individuals and groups.

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring the religious liberties of our Veterans, as well as honoring their service and sacrifice.

Sincerely,

*Chaplain Juliana Lesher*  
Chaplain Juliana Lesher, M.Div., Ph.D., BCC  
National Director, VA Chaplain Service