



News Release
For Immediate Release: 9.15.20
Contact: Lacey McNeil, media@firstliberty.org
Direct: 972-941-4453

**Department of Defense Strengthens Religious Liberty
Protections for Military Service Members**
*New guidance strengthens religious freedom and eliminates
unconstitutional measures found in previous versions.*

Washington, DC—First Liberty Institute today commended the United States Department of Defense (“DOD”) for issuing strong new guidance that protects religious liberty for military service members. The DOD’s actions reflect principles implemented by President Trump’s [Executive Order 13798](#), “Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty.” The revised DOD Instruction 1300.17 can be read [here](#).

“We still have a lot of work to do, but this new guidance is a huge step in the right direction for America’s brave service members, for whom faith is an essential element of their life and duty,” said Mike Berry, General Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “Since the days of the Revolutionary War, religious freedom has been a force multiplier for our military. We applaud our Commander in Chief, President Trump, and Secretary Esper for ensuring that religious liberty is alive and well in our Armed Forces.”

In recent weeks, First Liberty Institute has petitioned Secretary Esper regarding the censorship of military chaplains by the U.S. Army in the midst of the COVID-19, on behalf of service members who were prohibited from attending in-person religious services off base, and regarding the U.S. Navy de-funding its Catholic priests.

#

About First Liberty Institute

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

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