

Highly Decorated Army Chaplain Appeals Career-Ending Punishment for Expressing His Religious Beliefs

Chaplain reprimanded after expressing support for DOD policy

Ft. Hood, TX—The U.S. Army reprimanded Chaplain (Major) Andrew Calvert Chaplain Calvert for using his personal Facebook account to comment on a news article where he expressed his religious beliefs and his support for the Department of Defense’s (DOD) prohibition against transgender service members. At the time of his post, Chaplain Calvert’s statements were fully consistent with and supportive of existing DOD policy. Nevertheless, an Army investigator concluded Chaplain Calvert’s religious beliefs violated Army policy and the Army suspended Chaplain Calvert from his duties as chaplain.

First Liberty Institute represents Chaplain Calvert and submitted a rebuttal to the investigation on his behalf in March 2021. On April 22, Lieutenant General Robert P. White, issued a formal reprimand against Chaplain Calvert, effectively ending the chaplain’s career.

First Liberty is now appealing the reprimand in an effort to save Chaplain Calvert’s career and his reputation.

Chaplain Calvert’s post, made from his personal Facebook account that clearly disclaimed any official endorsement, argued that scientific evidence supported the DOD policy at that time. As a Christian minister, Chaplain Calvert felt compelled to comment by his sincerely held religious beliefs. Nevertheless, the Army concluded that Chaplain Calvert’s comments constituted unlawful discrimination. Taking adverse action against any chaplain because of their expressed religious belief violates federal and military law. Meanwhile, Chaplain Calvert’s unit is deprived of its only chaplain because the Army suspended him.

“Chaplain Calvert is a decorated Soldier with an exemplary record. He faces having his career ruined simply because he expressed his religious views on his personal Facebook page,” said Mike Berry, General Counsel at First Liberty Institute. “Throughout Chaplain Calvert’s military career, he has personified selfless service and sacrifice, and a desire to provide for the spiritual needs of those under his care. Punishing a chaplain because of their expressed religious belief is illegal and wrong.”

Chaplain Calvert has 16 years of service and has deployed to combat zones numerous times. His military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star and three Meritorious Service Medals.

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](https://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.