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Joseph Farah's
G2 Bulletin



TESTING THE FAITH

Clergy to protest at White House

Will ask Bush to reverse policy limiting chaplains' prayers

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A group of clergy is planning to gather outside the White House today to ask President Bush to nullify military policies that forbid chaplains from praying in Jesus' name.

According to a statement from the National Clergy Council, Christian leaders from various denominations will hold a news conference outside Lafayette Park just north of the White House to protest what the group calls an "escalating crisis" over chaplain prayer policies.

As WorldNetDaily reported, the U.S. Air Force released interim guidelines on religious expression in August that allow only a "brief nonsectarian prayer" during official ceremonies and events. The guidelines were developed in the wake of complaints from non-Christians at the Air Force Academy who believed Christians, both cadets and staff, were being too heavy-handed about their faith on campus. Also

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included in the directive is the regulation of proselytizing.

"This new policy of the military is an outrage," said the Rev. Rob Schenck, an evangelical minister and president of the National Clergy Council, in a statement. "We now have well-documented proof of this blatant violation of First Amendment guarantees. It is an egregious insult to the good men and women of every religious persuasion who serve in the chaplain corps."

According to NCC, Chaplain Gordon James Klingenschmitt, who is at risk of being fired from his post as a Navy chaplain for offering public prayers ending in Jesus' name, will join the church leaders at the protest.

"I'll be out on the street without a job," Klingenschmitt told CBN. "My family will be evicted from military housing, and I'll have no retirement after 14 years of glowing fitness reports, suddenly terminated from the Navy because I pray in Jesus' name."

In October, 75 members of Congress, led by Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., wrote to the president urging him to sign an executive order guaranteeing the right of chaplains to pray according to their religious traditions.

"If you are a Christian, people know your faith, that Jesus Christ is your savior," Jones, a Catholic, told the Denver Post. "That is part of your tradition, part of your faith. Why in the world should you have to deny your faith?"

The American Center for Law and Justice sponsored an [online petition drive](#) that urges President Bush to restore the right of Christian chaplains to pray "according to their faith" – for example, using Jesus' name in a prayer.

Said the Rev. Patrick J. Mahoney, a Presbyterian minister and director of the Christian Defense

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Coalition: "Sadly, we are witnessing a growing hostility toward expressions of faith in the public square. It is important the public be reminded that the First Amendment promises freedom 'of' religion not freedom 'from' religion. We call upon President Bush to issue this executive order allowing each military chaplain to pray according to their respective faith tradition, to ensure that religious freedom and the First Amendment are honored and protected."

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