



PO Box 151353  
Alexandria, VA 22315  
[www.chaplainalliance.org](http://www.chaplainalliance.org)  
(571) 293-2427

CHAPLAIN ALLIANCE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY  
January 31, 2017 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact CHAPLAIN ENDORSERS at [info@chaplainalliance.org](mailto:info@chaplainalliance.org), or call 571-293-2427

**Chaplains, CLS to Supreme Court:  
Reverse court-martial against Marine who posted Bible verses**

***Chaplain Alliance, Christian Legal Society file friend-of-the-court brief***

**WASHINGTON** — Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty and the Christian Legal Society have filed a [friend-of-the-court brief](#) with the U.S. Supreme Court in support of a Marine court-martialed for posting a Bible verse in her workspace.

Lance Cpl. Monifa Sterling posted the verse “No weapons formed against me shall prosper,” a reference to Isaiah 54:17, three times around her workspace at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in honor of the Trinity. Her supervisor said, “I don’t like the tone,” and told her to take them down. When Sterling declined, her supervisor took them down at the end of the duty day. Sterling reprinted and re-posted the messages, but she found them in the trash the next morning. She was then court-martialed.

“Every American should be able to live out their faith, especially those who are prepared give their lives for that right,” said Chaplain (COL) Ron Crews, USA (Retired), executive director of Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty. “The Supreme Court should reverse the decision of the military court, which should have upheld Lance Cpl. Sterling’s freedom to express her faith in this context.”

The brief filed in [Sterling v. United States](#) explains that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces appears to have wrongly discounted Sterling’s religious exercise because she was motivated, not compelled, by her religion to post the biblical quotation. As the brief points out, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act makes clear that religious exercise is protected regardless of whether it is compelled or central to the adherent’s faith.

“[T]he CAAF’s decision merits review because of this effective exhaustion requirement, for three reasons,” the brief states. “First, the imposition of an exhaustion requirement is in conflict with decisions in two other federal courts holding that RFRA contains no such requirement. Second, the CAAF decided an important issue of federal law in a way that restricts RFRA’s protections in the military justice system and could have implications in other contexts. Third, the CAAF’s interpretation of RFRA is wrong as a matter of the statutes’ text, structure, and purposes.”

***The Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty is an organization of chaplain endorsers, the faith groups that provide chaplains for the U.S. military and other agencies needing chaplains. The endorsers in the Chaplain Alliance speak for more than 2,600 chaplains serving the armed forces.***

###