

Presbyterian Church in America

Office of the Stated Clerk-
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Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Dr. L. Roy Taylor
Business Administrator
The Reverend John W. Robertson
Assistant to the Stated Clerk
The Reverend J. Robert Fiol

July 7, 2010

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America met in Nashville, Tennessee last week for its annual assembly. At that meeting the General Assembly instructed me to send you and to leaders of the U.S. military the following communication:

To: The President of the United States, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Armed Forces
From: The Presbyterian Church in America
Subject: Possible repeal of the current law regarding homosexual individuals in the military

1. **Concern:** The PCA is gravely concerned over the potential repeal of the current law governing homosexual individuals in the military. Should this repeal occur, we fear that the free exercise of the faith of our chaplains will be jeopardized. This repeal may go so far as to force the resignation of our currently serving chaplains from the military as well as the service of military members from this denomination.

2. **Consequences:** This potential change increases the likelihood of the following:

- Chaplains may be open to the charge of discrimination or command reprimand when they preach or teach in accordance with the passages in the Bible which directly speak to the sin of homosexual practice.
- Bibles in military chapels and on military bases may be under the threat of excision of all passages which speak very directly to the sin of homosexual practice. Whether it will be under the guise of “hate speech” or speech contrary to the policy of the Department of Defense, the effort may be made soon after the removal of the law.
- Marriage retreats conducted by chaplains intended to strengthen marriage may have to include homosexual couples which will violate chaplains’ faith tenets and negatively impact the voluntary participation of married heterosexual couples.
- Homosexual couples may seek union ceremonies or marriages, which are in violation of the beliefs and ordination vows of a large percentage of military chaplains, not just those from this denomination. Refusal may invite the charge of discrimination and command reprimand.
- The “free exercise” and free speech rights of chaplains and military members may be abrogated as Equal Opportunity policies, “hate speech” laws, or other legalities trump the First Amendment.

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3. **Appeal:** For the above and many other reasons affecting chaplains and military members in the ranks, we humbly recommend that you consider the ramifications for religious freedom that legislation in this regard may have. It is of utmost importance that you take all necessary measures to insure that our chaplains are free, without censure, to preach, teach, and practice in accordance with the beliefs of this denomination. We plead for this for the good of the nation, for the good of the chaplains who serve the nation on behalf of their church, for the good of the military members from this church who serve in our armed services, and for the protection of the constitutional principle of the free exercise of religion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Roy Taylor". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

L. Roy Taylor
Stated Clerk of the
General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church in America

CC: Dr. Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense
Admiral Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
General George W. Casey, Jr., Army Chief of Staff
Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations
General Norton A. Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff
General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps
General Carter F. Ham, Commanding General U.S. Army Europe
Mr. Jeh C. Johnson, Pentagon General Counsel
John M. McHugh, Secretary of the Army
Mr. Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy
Mr. Michael B. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force
Chaplain (COL) Thomas E. Preston, Executive Director, Armed Forces Chaplain Board
Rear Admiral Robert F. Burt, Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Navy
Major General Cecil R. Richardson, Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Air Force
Major General Douglas L. Carver, Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Army
Rear Admiral Mark L. Tidd, Chaplain of the Marine Corps
Chaplain, Colonel, Gary S. Linsky, Chaplain Advisor/Policy Team