

# COLUMBUS JEWISH FOUNDATION ROBINS CENTER FOR PHILANTHROPY

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June 10, 2014

General Mark A. Welsh III  
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Re: Air Force Instruction 1-1

Dear General Welsh,

Students of history will recall that the state religion of the Third Reich sought to transform the attitudes, values and mentalities of the German people into a single-minded, obedient national community. There was to be no law but Hitler, and ultimately no god but Hitler.

Let us for a moment imagine a scenario in which an American citizen were to accept this as his or her religious belief. Odious as that may be, it would be a protected Constitutional right.

If, however, that same misguided individual were to be an officer of the U.S. Air Force who preached such a wrongful gospel to her subordinates, what recourse would the subordinates have?


One would turn for guidance to certain paragraphs of Air Force Instruction 1-1, which, as presently written, quite properly instruct leaders at all levels to avoid actual or apparent use of their position to promote religious beliefs.

Shockingly, proposed changes to the AFI would require burdens of proof to ascertain if this is a sincerely held religious belief, and whether the ensuing demoralizing effect would be real or hypothetical. A reasonable person would not find this to be practical, logical or desirable. A reasonable person would not find the current regulations in need of change.

The Columbus Jewish Foundation fully supports the position on this matter that has been most capably articulated by Mikey Weinstein and the Military Religious Freedom Foundation—specifically, that changes to Paragraphs 2.11 and 2.12 of Air Force Instruction should **not** be made.

I urge you to resist attempts to revise the current language, which as presently written, satisfactorily limit commanders' and/or supervisors' authority to witness or proselytize otherwise defenseless subordinates.

Sincerely,



Jackie Jacobs  
Chief Executive Officer

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