

Tuesday Evening, May 7, 2019



MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
f o u n d a t i o n

**MRFF GOES MAJOR MEDIA VIRAL W/
FEDERAL LAWSUIT FILING
AND AERIAL PROTEST
AGAINST VA MEDICAL CENTER
IN MANCHESTER, NH**

USA TODAY | NEW YORK TIMES | U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT
WASHINGTON POST | ASSOCIATED PRESS | FOX NEWS | AIR FORCE TIMES
MILITARY TIMES | NAVY TIMES | ARMY TIMES | MARINE CORPS TIMES
UNION LEADER | DAILY KOS | DAILY CALLER | FRIENDLY ATHEIST
FT. WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

[Click to Read Lawsuit Filing](#)

MRFF HAS A RED-LETTER DAY!



**ABC TV WMUR 9
MANCHESTER, NH
COVERS MRFF**

[Click to Watch News Segment on WMUR-9 and Read Article](#)

**Quote by Ronald Reagan,
40th President of the United States**

"We were founded as a nation of openness to people of all beliefs. And so we must remain. Our very unity has been strengthened by our pluralism. We establish no religion in this country, we command no worship, we mandate no belief, nor will we ever. Church and state are and must remain separate. All are free to believe or not believe, all are free to practice a



faith or not..!" - RONALD REAGAN (public speech, Valley Stream, New York, October 26, 1984)

Quote by Mikey Weinstein, MRFF Founder and President

Mikey Weinstein worked for over 3 years in, and for, the West Wing of the Reagan Administration as legal counsel in the White House.

Photo: President Ronald Reagan shakes hands with Mikey Weinstein at an impromptu White House birthday party for the president in February 1987.



"That sectarian Christian bible BOLTED down to that POW/MIA table at the Manchester NH VAMC is a grotesque gang sign of fundamentalist Christian triumphalism, exceptionalism and supremacy, indeed a middle finger of unconstitutional repugnance to the plurality and separation of church and state guaranteed in the U.S. constitution. As a State Actor the VA cannot elevate one faith over another or no faith. The VA is wretchedly disrespecting millions of American veterans by doing so. The VA has ignominiously made sure that that sectarian Christian bible sticks out like a tarantula on a wedding cake in that POW/MIA display, and they've done so for a REASON!!. It's immoral, unethical and blatantly illegal under our Constitution. We look forward to aggressively prosecuting our case in Federal Court." - MIKEY WEINSTEIN (May 7, 2019)

USA TODAY COVERS MRFF

Bible display at Veterans Affairs facility in New Hampshire triggers lawsuit

By: Donovan Slack

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Excerpts from USA Today/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

WASHINGTON – A nonprofit group has tapped a veteran to sue the Department of Veterans Affairs over a Bible displayed at a VA facility in New Hampshire, arguing it violates the Constitution's prohibition of government establishment of religion.

[...]

Mikey Weinstein, the founder of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, said the group is filing the suit on behalf of New Hampshire veteran James Chamberlain.

Weinstein, who declined to make Chamberlain available for an interview, said the VA is a federal agency and its display of the Bible is an "outrage."

"That is stamping it with the approval of raising one faith over all the others," he said. "From our perspective, it's a repugnant example of fundamentalist Christian triumphalism, exceptionalism, superiority, and domination, and it cannot stand."

His group has been successful in pushing for the removal of Bibles from similar displays at other VA and military facilities in recent years, including in Buffalo, New York; Cheyenne, Wyoming; and Denver, Colorado, according to correspondence on the foundation's web site.

The foundation was initially successful at the Manchester VA Medical Center. The facility removed the Bible after receiving a complaint about it in January but then replaced it. The Bible is now in a plastic case on the display table.

[...]

[Click to Read Article](#)

NEW YORK TIMES COVERS MRFF

Lawsuit Filed Over Display of Bible at Veterans Hospital

By: Associated Press

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Excerpts from New York Times/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

CONCORD, N.H. — A U.S. Air Force veteran has sued the director of New Hampshire's veterans hospital over the display of a Bible.

The Bible became part of a memorial table at the Manchester VA Medical Center. It was removed in January after the Military Religious Freedom Foundation said some patients complained. **The group said it was a First Amendment violation.** The Bible reappeared in a display case in February after other veterans complained about its removal.

The Missing Man Table memorial honors missing veterans and prisoners of war. **The federal lawsuit filed Tuesday by James Chamberlain against the medical center's director says it should be a memorial to all who have served, regardless of their beliefs.**

A Department of Veterans Affairs spokesman said the center put the Bible back after consulting with lawyers.

[Click to Read Article](#)

WASHINGTON POST AND U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT COVER MRFF

Lawsuit Filed Over Display of Bible at Veterans Hospital

By: Kathy McCormack, Associated Press

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Excerpts from U.S. News & World Report/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — **A Bible on display at a memorial at New Hampshire's veterans hospital should be removed because it is a violation of the First Amendment, a U.S. Air Force veteran said in a federal lawsuit Tuesday.**

The Bible was carried by a prisoner of war in World War II and became part of the Missing Man Table honoring missing veterans and POWs at the entranceway of the Manchester VA Medical Center. The Department of Veterans Affairs said Tuesday the table was sponsored by a veterans group called the Northeast POW/MIA Network.

[...]

The medical center initially removed the Bible in January after another group, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, objected, saying it got complaints from 14 patients who felt it violated the First Amendment. A variety of religions were represented among the 14.

[...]

[Click to Read Articles](#)

FOX NEW ATTACKS MRFF

Atheist group sues over Bible display at VA hospital in New Hampshire

By: Caleb Park

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Excerpts from Fox News/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

An atheist group filed a lawsuit on Tuesday against the Department of Veterans Affairs over a Bible displayed at a VA facility in New Hampshire.

The group called the Bible's presence in the missing veterans and POWs memorial unconstitutional and an "outrage," but the VA says it won't be "bullied" into removing the Bible from the display.

The Bible was donated to Manchester VA Medical Center by former U.S. Army Air Corps Technical Sergeant (TSgt) Herman "Herk" Streitburger, of Bedford, who was held captive in a German Prisoner of War camp during World War II.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation said it filed the lawsuit on behalf of a New Hampshire veteran.

"That is stamping it with the approval of raising one faith over all the others," Mikey Weinstein, the founder of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, told USA Today. "From our perspective, it's a repugnant example of fundamentalist Christian triumphalism, exceptionalism, superiority, and domination, and it cannot stand."

[Click to Read Article](#)

**AIR FORCE TIMES / MILITARY TIMES
NAVY TIMES / ARMY TIMES
MARINE CORPS TIMES
COVER MRFF**

**Lawsuit filed over Bible display
at New Hampshire VA hospital;
uproar ensues**

By: Kent Miller

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

*(Excerpts from Air Force/Military/Navy/Army/Marine Corps Times/
Emphasis Added by MRFF)*

A dispute over a Bible display at the Manchester Veterans Affairs hospital in New Hampshire is erupting into a full-fledged war, to include close-air support and vows from both sides to trample the enemy underfoot.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation filed a federal lawsuit Tuesday on behalf of an Air Force veteran against Alfred Montoya, the director of the Manchester VA Medical Center, seeking the removal of a Bible on display at a POW/MIA table within the hospital. The display violates the First Amendment's establishment of religion clause, according to the lawsuit.

"The Christian Bible clearly doesn't represent all of the myriad religious faiths and non-faith traditions of the U.S. armed forces veterans using the Medical Center and to presume that it does is quite blatantly unconstitutional, unethical and illicit" said Michael L. "Mikey" Weinstein, MRFF's founder and president, in a statement.

[...]

[Click to Read Article](#)

**UNION LEADER
COVERS MRFF**

**Manchester VA Medical Center,
veterans battle over Bible display**

By: Mike Cousineau

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Excerpts from Union Leader/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

MANCHESTER -- An Air Force veteran is going to court to get a Bible displayed on a POW/MIA table removed from the Veterans Administration Medical Center, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday.

[...]

According to the suit, 14 military veterans -- all patients there -- made complaints to the **Military Religious Freedom Foundation during the last weekend of January regarding the placement of a Bible on the display table, which was off to one side in the entrance lobby, the suit said.**

[...]

The foundation, a civil rights advocacy group representing active military personnel and veterans, flew a banner Tuesday morning over the VA Center with the message: “VAMC -- Honor all POW/MIA -- Remove Bible.”

On Jan. 28, **MRFF founder Michael Weinstein phoned the medical center leadership and received an email hours later saying the Bible would be removed, which it was that day,** according to the court papers.

On Feb. 23, **the organization heard from some veterans stating the Bible was back on display on the POW/MIA table, this time in a locked plexiglass box in a new location right near the main entrance,** the suit said.

[...]

[Click to Read Article](#)



DAILY KOS COVERS MRFF

MRFF Files Lawsuit to Remove Bible from VA Facility POW/MIA Table

By: Chris Rodda

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Emphasis Added by MRFF)

A large Catholic Bible now sits enclosed in an even larger plexiglass display case on a POW/MIA remembrance table at a Veterans Affairs medical facility in Manchester, NH. This Bible had been removed from the table back in January after the **Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), acting on behalf of fourteen veterans who use the facility, complained about its presence in what is supposed to be a display to honor all POWs and MIAs, not just the Christian ones. **But it wasn't long before it was returned to the table, this time in a plexiglass display case, effectively making it the focal point of the display.****

This morning, acting on behalf of New Hampshire veteran James Chamberlain, a patient at the facility and a devout Christian, **MRFF filed a lawsuit to get this symbol of the Christian exclusivity removed once and for all.**

As I've previously written, **a Bible was not part of the original POW/MIA table tradition, started in 1967 by a group of Vietnam combat pilots known as the “River Rats.” The untraditional practice of adding a**

Bible, and turning what was started as a tradition to honor all POW's and MIAs into a display honoring only Christians, didn't emerge until over thirty years later, when the VFW Ladies Auxiliary published a script for the setting of the table and included a Bible among the items in a 1999 issue of their magazine.

In addition to filing the lawsuit, **MRFF also hired a plane to fly a banner over the medical center this morning appealing to the facility to “Honor all POW/MIA – Remove Bible.”**

[Click to Read Article](#)

DAILY CALLER COVERS MRFF

FEDS APOLOGIZE AFTER VETERANS AFFAIRS REMOVED BIBLE: 'WILL NOT BE BULLIED ON THIS ISSUE'

By: Luke Rosiak

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Emphasis Added by MRFF)

Federal officials restored a Bible to a prisoner of war display at a veterans hospital and said it “will not be bullied” by an activist group that wants it removed.

Department of Veterans Affairs staff at the Manchester, New Hampshire, veterans hospital “temporarily removed the Bible from the display out of an abundance of caution” after receiving a complaint, the VA’s national headquarters said in a statement Tuesday.

“Following that removal, Manchester VAMC received an outpouring of complaints from Veterans and other stakeholders – many of whom dropped off Bibles at the facility – in protest of this action,” the VA said. “We apologize to the Veterans, families and other stakeholders who were offended by the facility’s incorrect removal of this Bible.”

The Bible is part of a display in the hospital’s lobby honoring prisoners of war and missing soldiers.

A nonprofit called the Military Religious Freedom Foundation filed a lawsuit Tuesday to remove the Bible permanently. “This is an action requesting injunctive relief pursuant to the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. The plaintiff, James Chamberlain, and others are seeking the removal of a Christian Bible from the POW/MIA table in the entrance way of the Manchester VA Medical Center,” it says.

[Click to Read Article](#)

FRIENDLY ATHEIST COVERS MRFF

Christian Veteran Sues VA Hospital Over Bible Placement in POW/MIA Display

By: Hemant Mehta

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Excerpts from Friendly Atheist/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

Earlier this year, the Manchester VA Medical Center in New Hampshire put up a “Missing Man” table display in the front entrance. These displays are dedicated to prisoners of war or those missing in action, and they’re fairly commonplace at military bases. But this particular display had a Bible on the table, suggesting that POW/MIAs were only Christian, and that atheists and people of other faiths didn’t make the same sacrifices as other soldiers.

The **Military Religious Freedom Foundation** first noted the problem in **late January**. MRFF said 14 members, all of whom were patients at that VA and wished to remain anonymous out of fear of reprisal, contact them with their concerns. **Founder Mikey Weinstein** said **he called up Corey Beem, Acting Staff Assistant to the Director, and urged him to reconsider the display**. Within hours, he heard back:

I want you to know that you can inform your clients that the Manchester VAMC has the utmost respect and admiration for all Veterans, regardless of their beliefs. As such we are going to be removing the Bible from the display to better serve all Veterans.

Great! Problem solved!... **Except by late February, the Bible had returned to the display. This time it was in a “locked plexiglass box.”**

[...]

Incidentally, **the reason the Bible even went up with that display is because the guy who set up the table is a religious supremacist, who wrongly thinks we live in a Christian Nation.**

[...]

[Click to Read on Article](#)

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM COVERS MRFF

**‘Devout Christian’ sues to remove Bible display
from veteran center in New Hampshire**

By: Kaitlyn Alanis

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

(Excerpts from Fort Worth Star-Telegram/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

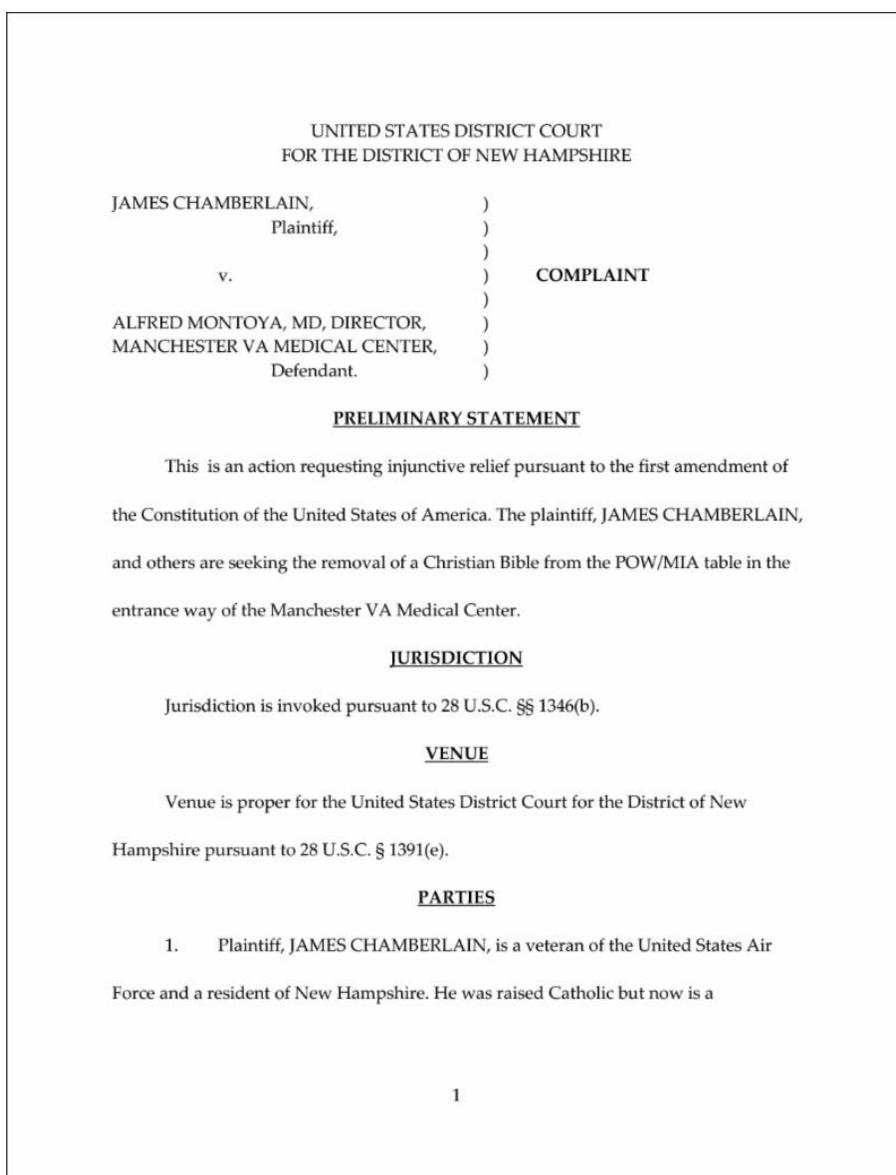
A “devout Christian” and Air Force veteran is suing the Department of Veterans Affairs to remove a Bible display at the Manchester VA Medical Center (MVAMC) in New Hampshire.

The lawsuit was filed by the **Military Religious Freedom Foundation** on behalf of veteran James Chamberlain.

[Click to Read Article](#)

TODAY, MAY 7, 2019

**MRFF FILED A FEDERAL LAWSUIT
AGAINST MANCHESTER VA OVER
UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHRISTIAN BIBLE**



[Click to Read Final Complaint](#)

**Christian Bible Encased in Plexiglass
and Bolted to POW/MIA Display Table
at VA Manchester, NH.**



**CLICK TO READ BACKGROUND ON
MANCHESTER VA BIBLE ISSUE, PROTEST
FLYOVER, AND FILING OF FEDERAL LAWSUIT**

**SOAPBOXIE
COVERS MRFF**

**10 Awful Things About the Army
That Nobody Tells You**

By: Cecil Kenmill

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

(Excerpts from Soapboxie/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

[...]

So what's this article actually about? Let's put it this way: if you want to buy a car, you can go to a dealership and stare at a car endlessly. You can walk around it as many times as you want, maybe even kick the tires. But remember, tires can be changed. You have to look under the hood. If you want to make the right decision about purchasing a car or pursuing a military career, you have to do your homework. This article will help you do that.

[...]

Still, the army seems to favor Christianity. There's lots of "oh lord" this and "praise Jesus" that. This shouldn't surprise anyone because the United States is populated by many Christians. As a Christian myself, I never did take it personally. However, **many other soldiers who identify as Jewish, Muslim, atheist, etc. are forced to put their beliefs in the back seat while fighting for a constitution that guarantees religious freedom.**

There is even **a non-profit Military Religious Freedom Foundation that fights for the religious equality of American soldiers in the U.S. military.** But don't bring it up at any of the "prayer breakfasts" you might find yourself at. Think that was a joke? Join and see. Just don't spill the salt.

[...]

[Click to Read on Soapboxie](#)

**INCOMING HATE
MRFF'S INBOX**

"God Loves You....am praying for you all"

On May 7, 2019, at 5:31 PM, (name withheld) wrote:

Mikey – the path you are on will not get you where you want to go.

In the end, it's all about love...and God IS Love. Never changing, Alpha and Omega

May God be with you and may you believe and then benefit from his promise of everlasting life through his son Jesus Christ.

(name withheld)

*To read response from
MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein:*

[Visit our website](#)

"Not a very promising case"

From: (name withheld)

Subject: Not a very promising case,

Date: May 7, 2019 at 11:22:55 AM MDT

To: mikey@militaryreligiousfreedom.org

I don't understand how people of religion could deny the need to comfort our military by recognizing this Bible as but one symbol among many. So easy for all to say in this time and place the this Bible offends. Next, we will be removing clergy from the battlefield and off the ships and stations. So misguided. Tell all rather don't feel excluded. Find an artifact from each of the many different faiths that had significance to a service member and put it there. Michael, to create a law respecting religion is to take a belief, a unique belief, not a universal truth, and codify it. Anti-homosexual federal laws come to the mind from Christianity. Blue laws too. Yet, we all know that faith is important to life. It gives many a reason to keep going in the face of insanity.

So, if you really want to drive the point home, perhaps you would do better to help those of us who were damaged by laws and regulations that did codify religious tenants, like that stupid rule barring homosexuals from service, the one I served under since 1982. At the time of my retirement 2004, I still wasn't allowed. Imagine how you would feel if you were told you were not fit to serve while you did serve, and honorably. I am disturbed and mentally ill now. I was assaulted on active duty, gaybashed, and locked in a trunk for five hours, kidnapped for another 6, hospitalized, and such, and then treated like a dog by homophobes at the hospital, and locked in a padded cell for another day. No help was given. In 2015, after decades of therapy on and off, I realized what had happened and filed a claim. I was compensated last year, though at 50% service connection, I have to get by on 24% of the income. Maybe you could explain why those numbers don't compute. I have never recovered and I wake up angry everyday. Why? Things are not getting better for my kind, they are getting worse, with the likes of First Liberty Institute or the shit that just went down in the UMC after I just spent three years preparing for ministry.

If you want to make a real case, maybe help all the gay veterans claim on the VA to pay 50% compensation for every veteran kicked out of the military for being gay, like a class action. That will remind these military and VA leaders the cost the next time they think to pull some bullshit out of a religious text and codify it. Such a shame too when Bible is very clear. Romans chapter 1 is an enumerated list of things not to call your brother and sister out in. Only an illiterate could think otherwise.

Where is the attorney who will take these religious zealots to task and sue them for claiming religious liberty is being infringed upon while they claim the Bible says x when it clearly says y? So many liars. So few attorneys.

I am sure you will not change your course now. So just think about it for the next time.

Thank you. (name withheld)

*To read response from
MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein:*

[Click to Read in Inbox](#)

"Bible"

On May 7, 2019, at 9:01 AM (name withheld) wrote:

I'll bet if it was a Quran on display your organization would be conveniently mute!

(name withheld)

*To read responses from
MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein, and
MRFF Advisory Board Members John Compere and Mike Farrell:*

[Click to Read in MRFF's Inbox](#)

"Sad News"

On May 7, 2019, at 12:36 PM, (name withheld) wrote:

Your organization is a SCAM sorry to say!!

(name withheld)

*To read response from
MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein:*

[Click to Read in MRFF's Inbox](#)

"Your hipocrisy"

From: (name withheld)
Subject: Your hypocrisy
Date: May 7, 2019 at 11:18:21 AM MDT
To: mikey@militaryreligiousfreedom.org

Your organization and the people that support you ARE NOT CHRISTIAN and are a disgrace to the uniform. You TOOK AN OATH TO DEFEND AND PROTECT THE CONSTITUTION THAT INCLUDES THE 1ST AMENDMENT. If someone was a Jew and a prisoner and kept their bible for support them through a trying time and was put there as encouragement to others that there is hope and help for them then fine – we hav 22 a day committing suicide everyday cause they can't get help from the VA IF THIS DISPLAY IS THAT ONE THING THAT GIVES THAT VET HOPE AND STOPS HIM/HER FROM COMMITTING SUICIDE THEN LEAVE IT ALONE.... BUT THEN YOU DON'T GET PAID OR PUBLICITY DO YOU FOR YOUR CAUSE TO SILENCE CHRISTIANITY AND HOPE FOR VETS.... BECAUSE YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION DON'T CARE ABOUT VETS JUST YOUR OWN POCKETS ... that mr.esq makes you a disgrace to the uniform... if you were in the Sr. Enlisted or Officer Corp you was not a leader you was a rank holder out for yourself... these lawsuits prove that... it seems

Christianity is sued constantly and expected to compromise their beliefs no others religion or ideology is attacked in this country as much as Christianity and Christians and if you can't see that then you are blind and a liar... .. i.e. cake bakers not wanting to bake a gay wedding cake, calligrapher not wanting to make gay wedding invitations, a Presbyterian church not wanting to marry gay couple and esq types like you sue, esq types like sue to remove little memorials on side of the road where someone's loved was killed by a drunk driver because it has a cross on it etc. etc.. .. and the liberals and dems in this celebrate in these attacks.. the person(s) that came to you about this display was either coerced into doing the lawsuit by some butt hurt atheist/anti-Christian, /anti-Trump idiot or by YOU to make money. I can tell a liar when when I hear and I know when someone is blowing smoke up my rear.. so don't try that with me. I believe because of what I see on your website you are fake and making it appear your military supporting.. I don't believe you. A TRUE CHRISTIAN AND MILITARY VETERAN WOULD NOT BE DOING THIS UNLESS THEY WERE ACTUALLY ATHEIST THUS THE ATTACK ON CHRISTIANITY.. I don't believe you are that uninformed or blind to what is happening to Christians in this country and around the world. ESPECIALLY IF YOU CLAIM TO BE CHRISTIAN YOURSELF.. of which of course I didn't hear you claim that beyond your military claims and anyone these days can claim that and expect people to believe them.. I don't until I have proof.. like the congressman that claimed Vietnam Veteran status and NEVER SET FOOT IN COUNTRY. (name withheld)

*To read response from
MRFF Advisory Board Member John Compere:*

[Click to Read in MRFF's Inbox](#)

MRFF Information/Contact:
(505) 250-7727

SUPPORT MRFF!

**Your Generous Support Allows us to Continue
our Fight in the Courts and in the Media**

[Make a Donation](#)

[Join MRFF's Constitution Society \(Recurring Donation\)](#)

[Help Build the Wall : Donate a "Brick"!](#)

