

Wednesday Evening, July 2, 2020

LANDMARK MRFF VICTORY!



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

U.S. ARMY SIDES WITH MRFF INCENSING 20 FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN GOP U.S. CONGRESS MEMBERS!

Is hell freezing over? The U.S. Army just backed the recent successes of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation' (MRFF) in defiance of aggressive complaints from twenty fundamentalist Christian Republican members of Congress!



Watch Congressman Doug Collins (R-GA) refer to Mikey as "Mickey" Weinstein at the 3:50 mark.

GOP Congressman Doug Collins Appears on Fox News @Night w/ Shannon Bream Complaining About "Mickey" Weinstein Last Evening 7/1/20

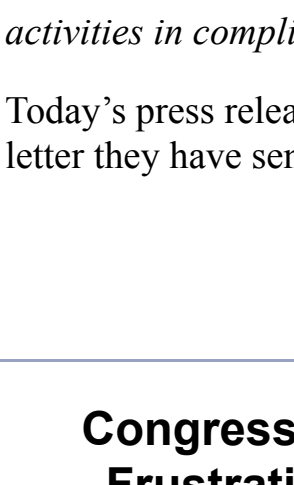
MRFF OP-ED ON DAILY KOS

On Daily Kos Recommended List

GOP Congress Members Incensed Over the Army Standing Behind Decisions in Favor of MRFF

By: Chris Rodda, MRFF Senior Research Director

Wednesday, July 2, 2020



Is hell freezing over?

The U.S. Army just backed the recent successes of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation' (MRFF) in defiance of aggressive complaints from twenty fundamentalist Christian Republican members of Congress!

On May 14, Rep. Doug Collins (R-GA) and nineteen other fundamentalist Christian members of the House of Representatives, chagrined over a recent string of victories for MRFF in protecting the rights of our service members to be free from unwanted proselytizing by those of their ilk, wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, attacking MRFF.

[...]

In the second to last paragraph of the letter, the Congress members expressed that they were "frustrated" that Army commanders were agreeing with MRFF, saying, "This must end."

[...]

The Army's response was that the Army is supporting the decisions of the commanders in favor of MRFF's demands:

"In all cases outlined in your letter, the commands that received a complaint sought assistance from their higher headquarters and the Army staff. In response to inquiries, the Army provided guidance to ensure chaplains and commands are able to continue to use social media for religious support activities in compliance with applicable laws and policy."

Today's press release from Reps. Collins and Lamborn announces a new letter they have sent to Secretary Esper, dated July 1 [...]

[Click to Read Full Op-Ed](#)

Congressmen Collins' and Lamborn's Letter of Frustration to Defense Secretary Mark Esper Over U.S. Army Agreeing with MRFF

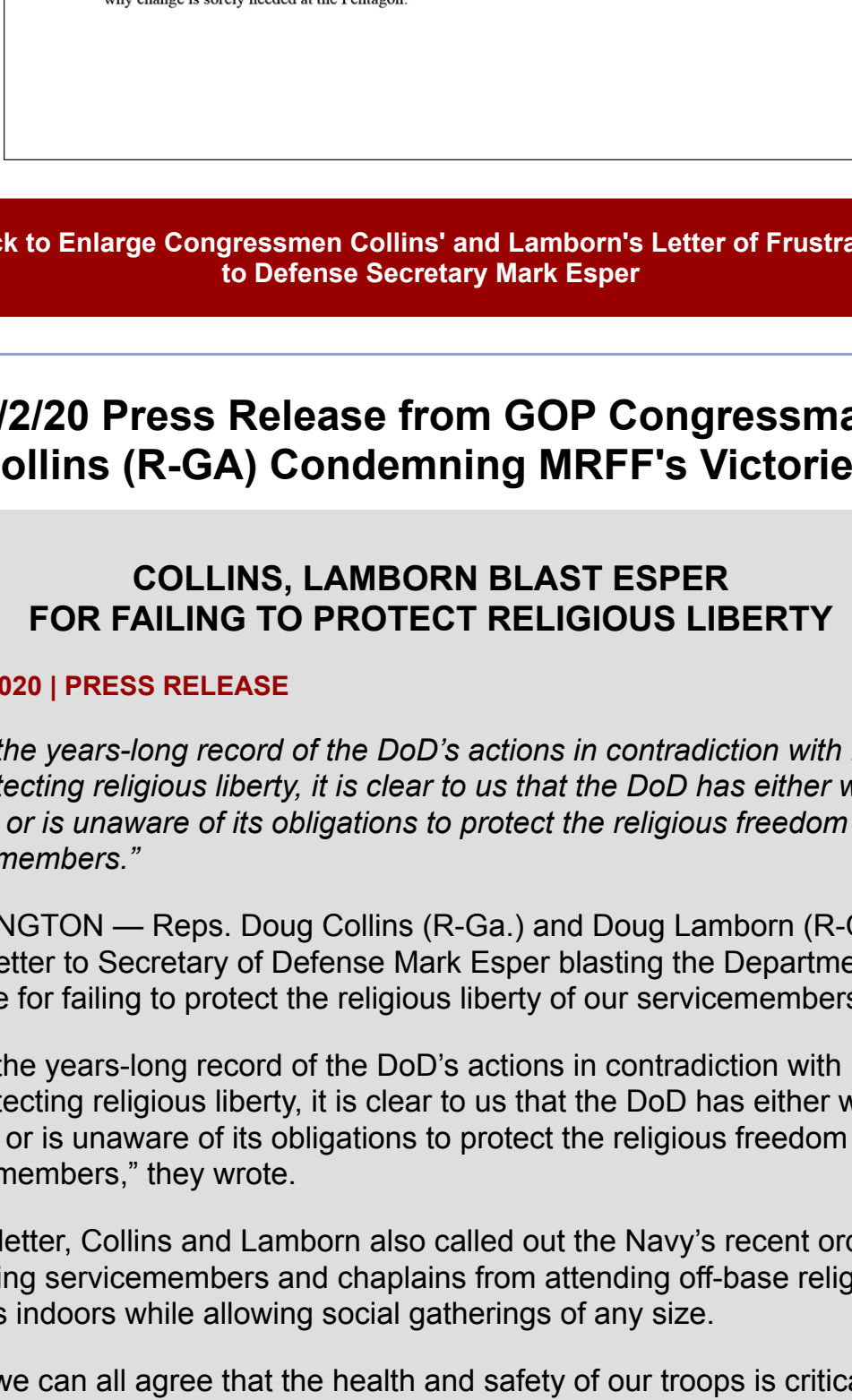
(Excerpts from Collins-Lamborn Letter below/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

"...we are discouraged to learn that the Army is not only standing behind the decisions of commands that have restricted the religious liberty of their chaplains and servicemembers, but the Army and the Department of Defense (DoD) are also supporting these actions and guiding commands' responses t o the aggressive demands of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) and Mikey Weinstein "

[...]

"We were encouraged following a conversation with Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Matthew Donovan on June 12, 2020, that signaled receptiveness to our concerns regarding the DoD's handling of the barrage of anti-faith claims made against chaplains by Mikey Weinstein and his organization, the MRFF . "

[...]



[Click to Enlarge Congressmen Collins' and Lamborn's Letter of Frustration to Defense Secretary Mark Esper](#)

7/2/20 Press Release from GOP Congressman Collins (R-GA) Condemning MRFF's Victories:

COLLINS, LAMBORN BLAST ESPER FOR FAILING TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

JUL 2, 2020 | PRESS RELEASE

"Given the years-long record of the DoD's actions in contradiction with Federal law protecting religious liberty, it is clear to us that the DoD has either willfully ignored or is unaware of its obligations to protect the religious freedom of its servicemembers."

WASHINGTON — Reps. Doug Collins (R-Ga.) and Doug Lamborn (R-Colo.) sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper blasting the Department of Defense for failing to protect the religious liberty of our servicemembers.

"Given the years-long record of the DoD's actions in contradiction with Federal law protecting religious liberty, it is clear to us that the DoD has either willfully ignored or is unaware of its obligations to protect the religious freedom of its servicemembers," they wrote.

In their letter, Collins and Lamborn also called out the Navy's recent order prohibiting servicemembers and chaplains from attending off-base religious services indoors while allowing social gatherings of any size.

"While we can all agree that the health and safety of our troops is critical during the ongoing public health crisis, singling out religious gatherings while allowing other activities and unrestricted social gatherings to take place is unlawful. To enforce that prohibition under threat of court-martial is unconscionable and provides yet another example of why change is sorely needed at the Pentagon."

On May 14, 2020, Collins, Lamborn, and a number of their colleagues sent a letter to Secretary Esper urging him to protect the religious liberty of our servicemen and women as commands across the globe were giving in to baseless demands from anti-faith outside groups.

On June 11, 2020, the Army responded by standing behind the decisions of commands that have restricted the religious liberty of their chaplains and servicemembers.

Read the full letter by clicking [here](#) or below.

[Collins/Lamborn Letter to Defense Sec. Mark Esper is now directly above press release as formatted by MRFF]

Letter From Department of the Army, on Behalf of Esper, Responding to the 20 Congress Members:



[Click to Enlarge Letter Behalf of Defense Sec. Esper, Responding to the 20 Fundamentalist Christian Congress Members](#)

BACKGROUND:

Letter to Secretary of Defense Esper Complaining of MRFF's String of Recent Victories

[Click to read MRFF Senior Research Director Chris Rodda's 5/14/20 Op-Ed: 20 Members of Congress Recognize the Impact of MRFF's Work](#)

[Click to read 5/14/20 letter from GOP Rep. Doug Collins and 19 other GOP Congress Member to Secretary of Defense Esper](#)

MRFF'S INBOX

"Next Steps Walla Walla SS Tattoo"

Hey Mikey,

My name is (name withheld), I was at the protest last Wednesday at the Walla Walla Police Department to stand against having a police officer with an SS tattoo in a visible place on his body. I've written a letter to the city council and I've connected with other who feel the same.

My friends and I would like to help in any way we can.

A group of us have reached out to Small through common connections to see if he would meet with us and allow us to give him some perspective on why we are protesting. Honestly doubt he will bite.

I'm also thinking about gathering signatures from my friends who were afraid to show at the rally due to the color of their skin and their professional status in the community.

Is there anything else we should do?

Thanks again for intervening in this issue. Many of us feel powerless and afraid in the face of this revelation about WYPD and their response. Having you on our side has given us a sense of hope in this situation.

(name withheld)

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MRFF Information/Contact:
(505) 250-7727

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