



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

**U.S. CONGRESS  
AFRAID OF MRFF AGAIN!  
BOTH HOUSE AND SENATE GOP  
TRYING TO STOP US!**

Following a string of MRFF victories:

**20 GOP members of the House of Representatives wrote to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper attacking MRFF. The Army, responding on behalf of Esper, STOOD BY ITS DECISIONS IN FAVOR OF MRFF.**

**Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), acting with the fundamentalist Christian First Liberty Institute, also wrote a letter to Secretary Esper attacking MRFF.**

**Now, the GOP-controlled Senate has inserted TRAINING ON HOW TO FORCE RELIGION ON OTHERS into the National Defense Authorization Act.**



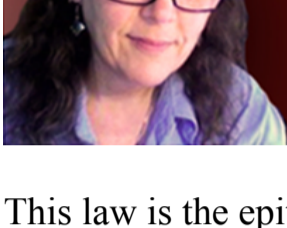
**MRFF OP-ED  
ON DAILY KOS**

Recommended reading on Daily Kos

**National Defense Authorization Act to Include Military Training on How to Force Religion on Others**

By: Chris Rodda, MRFF Senior Research Director

Monday, July 6, 2020



The “Religious Freedom Restoration Act” — sounds like a good thing, right? Well, it isn’t, as religious freedom advocates well know. **In recent years, this 1993 act has become the go-to law for fundamentalist Christian legal organizations in their defense of completely unconstitutional promotions of religion.**

This law is the epitome of the right-wing Christians’ view of the First Amendment’s religion clauses as creating only a **one-way wall** — **that the “Free Exercise” clause is only religion clause that matters, and that the other direction of the wall, the “Establishment” clause, doesn’t exist.**

Recently, **twenty fundamentalist Christian members of the House of Representatives** wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper attacking the **Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF)** for successfully stopping a number of unconstitutional promotions of religion by military chaplains and one Air Force officer.

[...]  
The letter from the congress members to Secretary Esper was followed by a **similar letter to Secretary Esper from Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)**. Taking credit for Cruz’s letter was the fundamentalist Christian legal organization First Liberty Institute, an organization that jumps in to fight virtually every success that MRFF has in protecting the religious liberty of our service members. Cruz’s letter, in keeping with First Liberty’s tactics, did two things — **distorting the facts and invoking the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.**

And now, in the Senate version of the **National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA)**, in a section titled **“Training on Religious Accommodation for Members of the Armed Forces,”** the invoking of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act will be taught to all commanders, chaplains, and judge advocates, training them to use the same tactic as fundamentalist Christian legal organizations like First Liberty to allow and justify all manner of foisting religion on unwilling service members. **In other words — military training in how to fight like a “fundie.”**

Are we to believe that this call for the military to be trained on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act was inserted in the Senate version of the NDAA right on the heels of the Congress members’ letter and Sen. Cruz’s similar First-Liberty-Institute-inspired letter attacking MRFF is merely a coincidence?

This is what the Religious Freedom Restoration Act says:

**“(a) IN GENERAL**

**“Government shall not substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, except as provided in subsection (b).”**

[...]  
If Section 541 of Senate’s National Defense Authorization Act is passed, every commander and chaplain bent on foisting their religion on everybody in any way at any time **will be trained to cry “substantial burden” if anyone complains about it.**

[...]  
But, just like they act as if the “Establishment” clause of the First Amendment doesn’t exist, and **all that matters is the “Free Exercise” clause**, fundamentalist Christians like First Liberty Institute ignore the part of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that, in keeping with *Parker v. Levy*, says (emphasis added):

**“Government may substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion ... in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest.”**

MRFF, as it has done for the last 15 years, **will continue to hold the military accountable to the absolutely “compelling governmental interest” of protecting the rights of all service members** to be free from the unwanted proselytizing of those chaplains, commanders, and other service members who see the military as a Christian mission field.

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**7/2/20 – U.S. Army Sides With MRFF, Incensing 20 Fundamentalist GOP U.S. Congress Members!**

**6/10/20 – GOP Senator Ted Cruz Condemns MRFF in Press Release and Letter to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper**

**5/14/20 – 20 GOP Congress Members Write to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper Condemning MRFF!**

**Americans United for Separation of Church and State's CHURCH & STATE MAGAZINE COMMENDS MRFF**

**Headstones With Nazi-Era Crosses To Be Removed**

July-August 2020 Issue

(Excerpts from Church & State/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

Officials at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have agreed to remove Nazi-era imagery from three headstones in national cemeteries in the wake of complaints from a civil liberties group.

The **Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF)** raised the issue in May after one of its supporters saw two of the headstones at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas. (The other headstone is located at Fort Douglas Post Cemetery in Salt Lake City.)

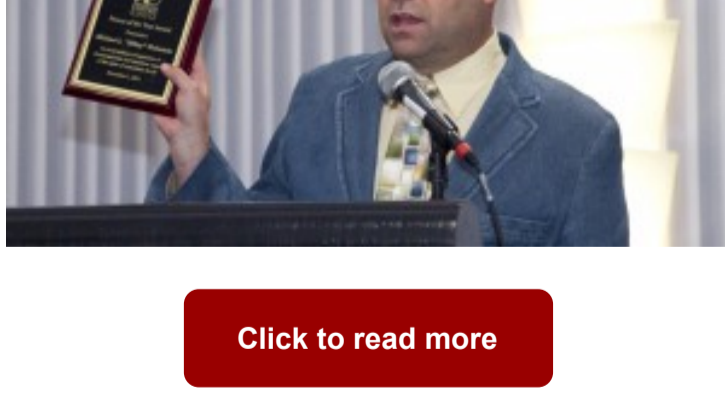
[...]  
**MRFF President Mikey Weinstein** welcomed the decision, which **Americans United supported.**

“MRFF advocates moving these Nazi headstones to the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., where an appropriate educational display can be erected explaining the salient particulars as to how and why those Nazi headstones are on display there,” Weinstein said in a statement.

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**MIKEY WEINSTEIN, FIRST EVER AU "PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD" HONOREE**

**In 2011, long-time MRFF ally Americans United for Separation of Church and State honored MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein as its inaugural "Person of the Year."**



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**Click for background on MRFF's victory in getting the VA to remove the Nazi headstones from military cemeteries.**



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

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