

December 6, 2013

The Honorable Charles T. Hagel  
Secretary of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel:

By the beginning of this summer a number of events had occurred that raised concerns about the status of religious liberties enjoyed by America's military personnel. Consequently, a number of non-profit organizations formed the Restore Military Religious Freedom Coalition to defend the religious rights that have long been enjoyed by members of our Armed Forces.

In his capacity as the informal head of this coalition of like-minded groups, Gen. Boykin wrote to you on October 24, 2013 to express grave concern about equal opportunity (EO) training incidents at Camp Shelby and Fort Hood in which our colleagues at the American Family Association (AFA) were singled out and described as extremists. We believe this categorization was applied to AFA based on materials produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

We acknowledge the response from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Jessica L. (Garfola) Wright, who recently recognized what appears to be a problem with current EO training materials. As your Department considers a review of current DOD training resources, it is imperative that the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) ensure future materials do not rely on information from organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) or any others that engage in groundless and highly pejorative mischaracterizations of long-standing ministries and organizations for their own political purposes.

In particular, DEOMI materials should not endorse the work of the SPLC, since it was linked to domestic terrorism in federal court in February 2013. At that time, Floyd Lee Corkins admitted he used SPLC's website to target the Family Research Council (FRC) prior to his attack on the organization. According to his plea statement to the court, Corkins entered the FRC building on August 15, 2012 intending to kill as many people as possible. He was stopped only by FRC's building manager, Leo Johnson, who Corkins shot. Thus, it is completely appropriate that he was convicted of committing an act of domestic terrorism, thereby, connecting SPLC to this heinous act.

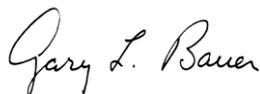
Despite this damning tie between the Southern Poverty Law Center and actual extremists, it is well documented that individual installation EO briefings continue to draw upon SPLC data and talking points. That would likely encourage other trainers to use their materials.

Our coalition believes OSD should issue clear guidance to DEOMI and instructing installations to stop relying on SPLC and other non-governmental sources as approved resources for equal opportunity training or other purposes – especially, those dealing with such topics as hate crimes and other politically charged activities.

Rest assured that our coalition members will not allow our organizations to be demonized by DOD agencies.

We would appreciate an update from you following the review of DOD training materials. Before such guidance is issued, however, we believe it would be beneficial if several representatives of our coalition were to meet with you to discuss our DOD-wide concerns.

Respectfully,



Gary L. Bauer  
President  
American Values



Paul Caprio  
President  
Patriotic Veterans



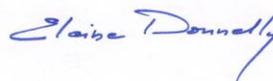
William J. Becker, Jr.  
President/CEO  
Freedom X



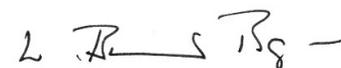
CH (COL) Ronald A Crews, USA Retired  
Executive Director  
Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty



Lt. General (Ret.) William G. Boykin  
Executive Vice President  
Family Research Council



Elaine Donnelly  
President  
Center for Military Readiness



L. Brent Bozell III  
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Media Research Center



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