



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON**

February 26, 2025

**Mr. Hiram S. Sasser III
First Liberty Institute
2001 West Plano Parkway, Suite 1600
Plano, TX 75075**

Dear Mr. Sasser:

This is in response to your February 11, 2025, letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which was submitted on behalf of Chaplain Russel Trubey, as well as other affected VA Chaplains.

Thank you for reaching out regarding your concerns and for allowing VA to take the actions necessary to address this issue and prevent any future missteps on the part of this Department. It is undisputed and well-settled law that constitutional law and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act protects statements made by all VA Chaplains while delivering sermons in accordance with their ecclesiastical endorsers. Chaplain Trubey's June 23, 2024, sermon is covered by those protections. VA is committed to providing training to all Chaplains and health care system leaders in VA regarding these legal protections. VA is committed to preventing any future misapplication of the law.

With respect to the Letter of Reprimand issued to Chaplain Trubey on November 21, 2024, the determination to release that document to Chaplain Trubey was made in error and was rescinded once staff were counseled regarding the complexities of the applicable laws.

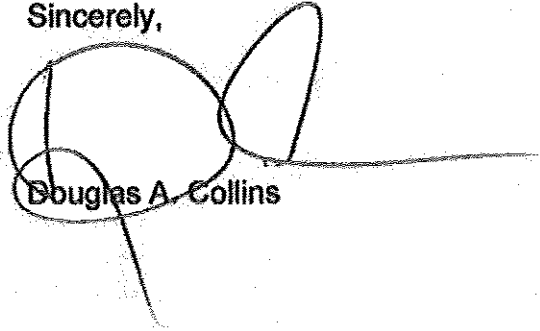
Further, VA confirms that there is no national or local policy or standard operating procedure which inhibits Chaplain sermons. To the extent that there have been any proposed changes to any existing policy, those proposals will not move forward and have been rescinded. There will be no further action on these policies. VA reiterates again its commitment to upholding and enforcing the constitutional and statutory protections afforded to Chaplains when providing spiritual guidance in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. VA will take all steps necessary to avoid any future inconsistent actions. It is my hope that these measures adequately resolve this matter.

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Mr. Hiram S. Sasser III

Thank you for your continued support of VA's mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line extending to the right. The signature is positioned above the printed name Douglas A. Collins.

Douglas A. Collins

cc: Mr. David J. Hacker
Ms. Erin E. Smith
Ms. Tiffany D. Dunkin
Mr. Randall Wenger
Mr. Jeremy Samek
Ms. Cheryl Allen
Ms. Lauren Hackett