



Focus on Religious Freedom

*"When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen."
George Washington, 1775*

Restoring Religious Freedom to Thirty-Five Members of Military

More than 12,000 military service members seeking a religious exemption to the Covid vaccine had all been denied an exemption until one resounding victory to 35 Navy SEALs on Jan. 3, 2022. Federal Judge Reed O'Connor found that, "the Covid-19 pandemic provides the government no license to abrogate" the freedoms of any American. "The Plaintiffs' loss of religious liberties outweighs any forthcoming harm to the Navy. Even the direst circumstances cannot justify the loss of constitutional rights." ⁽¹⁾

"No longer can the Navy force service members to choose between their faith and serving their country," said Mike Berry, representing the 35 SEALs on behalf of First Liberty Institute. "If religious freedom means anything, it must mean that those who are sworn to protect our freedoms should not be forced to lose those very same freedoms."⁽²⁾ "Of the thousands of religious exemptions that have been sought (the military) has not approved a single one. That is textbook discrimination," Berry said. ⁽³⁾

"My clients believe that the usage of fetal cell lines derived from abortions in the testing and development of any medical treatment is wrong," said attorney R. Davis Younts. "Interestingly, the Covid-19 vaccines have caused many individuals to learn about this unethical practice for the first time and they intend to take a stand against this practice in the future." ⁽⁴⁾

Happening Now: Still Waiting for Court Date and Justice for Masked Student ⁽⁵⁾

Lydia Booth, a 3rd grader at Simpson Central School in Mississippi in 2020, was forced to remove her mask that said "Jesus Loves Me", even though school officials allowed students to wear a wide variety of other messages on their masks including sports team logos and "Black Lives Matter." ⁽⁶⁾ Lydia said of the mask, "It makes me feel like I'm protected by Jesus." ⁽⁷⁾

After Lydia's mother did research, she found there was no school policy against expressing religious beliefs on a mask although school officials told her this is the policy. Lydia's First Amendment right to free speech and religious freedom had been violated.

Their Alliance Defending Freedom counsel said, "We're seeing administrators all over the place trying to shut down speech. They have many different reasons for doing it, but we're seeing a lot of Christian and conservative viewpoints being marginalized." ⁽⁸⁾

(armedforcesconnect.org, 1/5/22(1)(4); presscorp.org, 1/4/22(2); beckernews.com, 1/3/22(3); abcnews.go.com, 12/19/21; heritage.org, 1/5/22; adflegal.org., 12/20/21(5); adflegal.org, 11/2/20(6); christianitytoday.com, 5/18/21(7); adflegal.org, 10/5/21(8))

"If I can sit down for freedom, you can stand up for children." Rosa Park