



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2011

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-2000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you know the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was enacted in 1996 by large bipartisan majorities in both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton. It ensured that states would not have to recognize same-sex marriages from other states, and that the federal government would recognize only the union of one man and one woman as "marriage."

In a memorandum signed on April 13, 2011 by Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral Mark Tidd, it appears that the United States Navy is preparing and training its chaplains to defy federal statute and ignore the provisions placed within the Defense of Marriage Act. This memorandum, which we have attached, states that in the case of same-sex marriage federal property, as all military base facilities are, may be used to perform a ceremony that is not recognized as a lawful marriage under DOMA:

"If the base is located in a state where same-sex marriage is legal, then base facilities may normally be used to celebrate the marriage."

We find it difficult to understand how the military is somehow exempt from abiding by federal law. Not only does this document imply recognition and support of same-sex marriage in opposition to DOMA, but it also implies that the Navy will now perform these marriages so long as they do not violate state statutes.

Offering up federal facilities and federal employees for same-sex marriages violates DOMA, which is still the law of the land and binds our military, including chaplains. The Administration and various states may be operating as if DOMA doesn't exist, but the Navy and Marine Corps and all the Armed Services are sworn to obey the law, which this new instruction violates.

Therefore Mr. Secretary we find it unconscionable that the United States Navy, a federal entity sworn to "preserve and protect the Constitution of the United States" believes it is their place alone to train and direct servicemembers to violate federal law. The Defense of Marriage Act protects the sanctity of the bond specifically between a man and a woman, and as defenders of the institution of marriage we agree with the vast majority of the American people that the preservation of marriage is critical to society's stability and is in the best interest of American families. Our concern is over the failure of the Navy to support the law of the land, without prejudice.

We respectfully request you to direct the service for which you are responsible to follow and defend the Constitution and federal law as the oath you swore requires. It is not the place of any citizen of this country to pick and choose which laws they are going to obey. We expect citizens sworn to defend those laws to set the example in their application.

Sincerely,

W. Coalder

Jefferson

Bob Sten

Tim Huelskamp

Bill Shuster

Mig Romo

Anna Henth

Bill Johnson

Wally Herger

Lot Riehl

Phil Carter

Sten Palaco

Doug Lamborn

Dr. Thi

David P. Roe

Austin Scott

Chad Finny

Nicky Hartzler

Steph Finche

Steve King

Mike Coffman

Virginia Fox

Bob S. [unclear]

Don [unclear]

Clayton [unclear]

Bob S. [unclear]

Scott Mancini

Wan Burton

Chris Smith
Lyn [unclear]

K. Michael [unclear]

Kent [unclear]

Judy [unclear]

John [unclear]

Casey TX-23

Randy [unclear]

Miss Flores

Bob Wilson

Robert B. [unclear]

Walter B. Jones

Jeff Miller