

Lawsuits tackle religion in U.S. military

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Two lawsuits have been filed in Washington against the U.S. military with differing claims on how the service treats evangelical Christians.

A suit filed by Chaplain Gordon Klingenschmitt in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia claims the Navy is "suppressing (his) Christian faith" by forcing him to use non-sectarian prayers among diverse groups of sailors, The Washington Post reported Thursday. Klingenschmitt's suit, filed by the Rutherford Institute, a conservative legal organization specializing in religious and civil rights, also claims his objections to the policy are the reason he was court-martialed in September and is now being removed from the service.

Meanwhile, former White House counsel Michael Weinstein said he plans to file a broader suit after his initial action against the Air Force was dismissed. The suit claimed religious bias in favor of evangelical Christians at the Air Force Academy who attempted to pressure members of other faiths.

Weinstein said he was now choosing specific incidents from "a veritable cornucopia of new plaintiffs and accusations" for the second suit.