

9 Jul 06

Senator Barack Obama
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Obama:

I read your speech about “reaching out” to evangelicals, and how “not every mention of God in public is a breach to the wall of separation - context matters.” I also read your critics who imagined you pandering for Christian votes, claiming you’d never actively fight for religious liberty like Republicans do. I pray your critics are wrong and your words are sincere. I’d like to know, so I offer you one small test.

I am a US Navy Chaplain who’s been punished (in writing, three times) because I pray “in Jesus name” and because I quoted John 3:36 in the chapel during an optionally-attended Christian memorial service. My story’s been on the front pages of the NY Times, Wash Post, and Wash Times, read here: www.persuade.tv

75 Congressmen and 29 pro-family groups wrote the President to intervene (Atch 2), and over a million Americans have called or petitioned the White House, but the President has not yet signed an executive order to enforce the law. US Code Title 10 Section 6031 mandates: “An officer in the chaplain corps may conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of the church of which he is a member.”

Ignoring federal law, the top Navy judge ruled it’s OK to punish a chaplain for quoting the Bible in the chapel during optionally-attended worship, and then rewarded my commander for censoring my evening prayers onboard ship. My career is still in jeopardy today, just like 66 evangelical chaplains suing the Navy. The Navy agrees I’ll never be promoted again, because of the content of my prayers and sermons.

My Senator Hillary R. Clinton has already written a letter on my behalf (Atch 1), but senior naval officials were unresponsive to her concerns (Atch 3). My civilian bishop and endorsing agent also wrote (Atch 4), but were shown great disrespect by Rear Admiral Ruehe and Mrs. Anita K. Blair, as World Net Daily accurately reported (Atch 5), and the front page of Thursday’s Washington Times confirmed (Atch 6).

I know you’re a champion of free speech and civil liberties, and a man of personal faith and conviction. My case presents an opportunity for you to prove you’re a man of action, and you mean what you say.

I’m simply requesting to meet with you face to face and take a photo, and you make a speech about my issue, or at least write a detailed personal letter (not just a form letter) perhaps with Senator Clinton co-signing, to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, requesting he overrule the Secretary of the Navy in my case, expressing your grave concern that senior naval officials have literally invaded the chapel to punish sermons during optionally-attended worship.

As you said, “context matters” so I ask you, are Christian Sailors no longer entitled to a Christian burial? This isn’t about getting Christian votes, it’s about honoring the faith of a deceased Christian Sailor, a member of my flock, who served with me in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and deserved a Christian memorial.

Your intervention can help me honor his memory, and restore religious liberty to all our military chaplains, now under direct government pressure to censor prayers and sermons, even in optional worship in chapel. Please contact me at 719-360-5132 cell, or chaplaingate@yahoo.com, or fax 757-444-7362.

In Jesus name,

Gordon James Klingenschmitt

cc: Senator Clinton