

RESOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE MILITARY

WHEREAS, the 2012 Platform of the Republican Party states, “We support rights of conscience and religious freedom for military chaplains and people of faith;” and

WHEREAS, there have been several reports recently of increasing intolerance of religious speech and practice, particularly of the Judeo-Christian faiths, in branches of the U.S. Military; and

WHEREAS, it has been reported that chaplains have been censored when praying in public settings or when ministering to troops, and access to Bibles has been denied; and

WHEREAS, practice of religious beliefs and free speech are implicitly protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which states in part, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech...;” and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that our men and women in the armed forces, many of whom may be called upon to give their lives protecting our freedoms, are granted the same exercise of these Constitutional freedoms while in the service of their country, within the bounds of regular military discipline and readiness; and

WHEREAS, Representative John Fleming (R-LA) authored an amendment that would specifically expand the “protection of rights of conscience of members of the Armed Forces and chaplains, to ensure religious liberty for service members” also referred to as the “military religious freedom amendment” which passed in the House Armed Services Committee on June 5, 2013, to be added to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Obama Administration made a statement saying, “The administration strongly objects to Section 530 (the Fleming Amendment), which would require the Armed Forces to accommodate, except in cases of military necessity, ‘actions and speech’ reflecting the ‘conscience, moral principles or religious beliefs of the member;” and

WHEREAS, Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) and Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), in response to the intolerance from the President, have offered a similar Amendment in the Senate (#174 of Section 533-NDAA), which passed the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 13, 2013, with bipartisan support; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Republican National Committee strongly supports upholding the religious liberties of our military men and women, from inductee to retiree, to express their faith without fear of reprisal or reprimand; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the Republican National Committee supports the amendments of Representative Fleming and Senators Lee and Cruz to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 to insure religious freedom in all branches of the U.S. Military; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which Congress has the power and authority to make and amend, (U.S. Constitution Article 1, Section 8, in part, “The Congress shall have the Power...To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces”) should be made to clearly protect the Constitutional standards of religious freedoms in its provisions.