



October 24, 2013

[REDACTED]
OVERNIGHT DELIVERY SERVICE

Lieutenant General Michelle D. Johnson
Superintendent

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear General Johnson:

On behalf of the American Center for Law and Justice, congratulations on your recent appointment as the 19th Superintendent of the Air Force Academy. It is a great honor to be selected for such a prestigious position.

By way of introduction, the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) is a non-profit organization dedicated to defending constitutional liberties secured by law. ACLJ attorneys have successfully argued numerous free speech and religious freedom cases before the Supreme Court of the United States.¹

The purpose of this letter is to respond to the erroneous demand made by Mr. Michael L. "Mikey" Weinstein to Air Force Academy officials to remove the phrase "so help me God" in the Academy Honor Code. Mr. Weinstein claims that the phrase violates the Constitution. This claim is wrong as a matter of law, as we demonstrate below.

¹*See, e.g., Pleasant Grove City v. Summum*, 129 S. Ct. 1125 (2009) (unanimously holding that the Free Speech Clause does not require the government to accept other monuments merely because it has a Ten Commandments monument on its property); *McConnell v. FEC*, 540 U.S. 93 (2003) (unanimously holding that minors enjoy the protection of the First Amendment); *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Sch. Dist.*, 508 U.S. 384 (1993) (unanimously holding that denying a church access to public school premises to show a film series on parenting violated the First Amendment); *Bd. of Educ. v. Mergens*, 496 U.S. 226 (1990) (holding by an 8-1 vote that allowing a student Bible club to meet on a public school's campus did not violate the Establishment Clause); *Bd. of Airport Comm'rs v. Jews for Jesus*, 482 U.S. 569 (1987) (unanimously striking down a public airport's ban on First Amendment activities).

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Review of the Facts

On or about Friday, October 18, 2013, Mr. Weinstein contacted Air Force Academy officials, demanding that they remove the words “so help me God” from the cadet Honor Code.² Mr. Weinstein took grave exception to the phrase because it included the word “God.” As a proponent of strict separation of church and state, he argues that inclusion of the phrase violates at least two provisions of the Constitution, to wit, the no religious test for office clause as well as the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Review of the Law

Mr. Weinstein alleges, *inter alia*, that the phrase violates Article 6, Clause 3, of the United States Constitution that prohibits religious tests for office³ as well as the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.⁴ By doing so, Mr. Weinstein simply disregards the phrase’s long pedigree in the United States. President George Washington himself added the phrase to the Presidential oath of office when he took it for the first time as our First President.⁵ It is also widely used in other contexts as well. Rule 807 in the UCMJ, for example, discusses the procedure for administering oaths in the military.⁶ The oath used for witnesses is as follows: “Do you (swear) (affirm) that the evidence you shall give in the case now in hearing shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (, so help you God)?”⁷ Likewise, the other oaths listed in the UCMJ for military judges, members, counsel, reporters, interpreters, and escorts all include the phrase, “(, so help you God),” at the end of each oath.⁸ In fact, the phrase is also included in the oath of enlistment for the Air Force.⁹

Mr. Weinstein’s allegation that the phrase somehow implicates Article 6, Clause 3, of the United States Constitution is misguided and erroneous. Religious tests for office were found in certain state constitutions in the earliest days of our Nation.¹⁰ Failure to profess the required religious belief in such states would result in one’s inability to stand for public office in those states. *Nothing of the sort happens at the Air Force Academy.* No cadet is denied a commission as an officer in the United States Air Force because of

²Pam Zubeck, *AFA Honor Code: ‘So Help Me God’*, COLORADO SPRINGS INDEP. (Oct. 21, 2013), <http://www.csindy.com/IndyBlog/archives/2013/10/21/afa-honor-code-so-help-me-god>.

³U.S. Const. art. 6, cl. 3.

⁴U.S. Const. amend. I.

⁵Robert F. Blomquist, *The Presidential Oath, the American National Interest and a Call for Presiprudence*, 73 UMKC L. REV. 1, 34 (2004).

⁶R.C.M. 807(b)(2).

⁷*Id.* at Discussion (inviting the oath taker to personalize the phrase to “so help *me* God” in response).

⁸*Id.*

⁹*See U.S. Air Force Enlistment Opportunities*, AIR FORCE, 2, <http://www.airforce.com/pdf/ebrochure/ea/6F9598FCD738A5A96C15C84FA135CB35/electronic%20ea%2010-001.pdf> (last visited October 24, 2013).

¹⁰*See, e.g.*, PA. FRAME OF GOVERNMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA, Laws Agreed Upon in England, art. XXXIV (1682); DEL. CONST. of 1776, art. 22 (1776).

his/her religious faith or lack thereof. No cadet is denied a commission because he/she declines to recite the phrase “so help me God” affixed to the Honor Code. Even in the examples cited in the previous paragraph where the identical phrase is used, persons who object to the phrase are not required to say it. The primary purpose of such a phrase is to remind the oath taker that what he/she is doing is of utmost importance and that it is not to be undertaken lightly or flippantly.¹¹

There is also no establishment problem with the phrase. One of the methods used by the Supreme Court of the United States for interpreting the meaning and legal reach of the First Amendment is to examine how early Congresses acted in light of the Amendment’s express terms. One can begin to understand what the Establishment Clause allows (and disallows) by examining what transpired in the earliest years of our Nation during the period when Congress drafted the First Amendment and after the states ratified it.¹² Early national leaders acted in ways that some today (like Mr. Weinstein and his organization, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF)) argue expressly violate the Establishment Clause. For example, President George Washington issued proclamations of thanksgiving to Almighty God during his presidency,¹³ and President John Adams called for a national day of fasting and prayer.¹⁴ Even President Thomas Jefferson—a *man often described as a strong defender of strict church-state separation*—undertook similar actions. In particular, President Jefferson signed multiple congressional acts providing for Christian missionary activity among the Indians.¹⁵ Further, during his presidency, President Jefferson also developed a school curriculum for the District of Columbia that used the Bible and a Christian hymnal as the primary texts to teach reading,¹⁶ and he signed the Articles of War, which “[e]arnestly recommended to all officers and soldiers, *diligently to attend divine services.*”¹⁷ Once the

¹¹In reference to the procedure for administering oaths, the UCMJ indicates that “[a]ny procedure which appeals to the conscience of the person to whom the oath is administered and which binds that person to speak the truth, or, in the case of one other than a witness, properly to perform certain duties, is sufficient.” R.C.M. 807(b)(2).

¹²Most agree that, at a minimum, the Establishment Clause was intended to prohibit the creation of a national church for the United States, such as existed in England. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that the First Amendment did not preclude individual states from adopting a state church or a state religion. See CARL ZOLLMAN, *AMERICAN CHURCH LAW* 2-4 (W. Publ’g Co. 2d ed. 1933) (1917). In fact, Massachusetts was the last state to disestablish its state church, and it did so of its own accord in 1833, some forty years after the ratification of the First Amendment. Kelly Olds, *Privatizing the Church: Disestablishment in Connecticut and Massachusetts*, 102 J. POL. ECON. 277, 281–82 (1994).

¹³*E.g.*, CATHERINE MILLARD, *THE REWRITING OF AMERICA’S HISTORY* 61–62 (1991).

¹⁴Proclamation of President John Adams (Mar. 6, 1799), in 1 *A COMPILATION OF THE MESSAGES AND PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS 1789-1897* 284–86 (James D. Richardson ed., 1899).

¹⁵See DANIEL L. DREISBACH, *REAL THREAT AND MERE SHADOW: RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT* 127 (1987) (noting that the 1803 treaty with the Kaskaskia Indians included federal funds to pay a Catholic missionary priest; noting further treaties made with the Wyandotte and Cherokee tribes involving state-supported missionary activity).

¹⁶JOHN W. WHITEHEAD, *THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION* 100 (1982) (citing I J. O. WILSON, *PUBLIC SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON* 5 (1897)).

¹⁷CHARLES E. RICE, *THE SUPREME COURT AND PUBLIC PRAYER: THE NEED FOR RESTRAINT* 63–64 (1964) (emphasis added).

U.S. Navy was formed, Congress also enacted legislation *directing* the holding of, *and attendance at*, divine services aboard U.S. Navy ships.¹⁸ As one honestly examines governmental acts contemporaneous with and shortly after the adoption of the First Amendment, it is difficult to deny that, in the early days of our Republic, church and state existed comfortably (and closely) together, with contemporaries of the drafters of the First Amendment showing little concern that such acts violated the Establishment Clause. As the Court in *Marsh v. Chambers* aptly recognized, actions of the First Congress are “contemporaneous and weighty evidence” of the Constitution’s “true meaning.”¹⁹

More recent Court decisions have confirmed that strict separation between church and state is not required by the Constitution and, further, that permissible religious accommodation need not “come packaged with benefits to secular entities.”²⁰ The Supreme Court has also noted that strict church-state separation could lead to absurd results. In *Zorach v. Clauson*,²¹ the Court stated that the First Amendment

does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of Church and State. . . . Otherwise the state and religion would be aliens to each other—hostile, suspicious, and even unfriendly. . . . Municipalities would not be permitted to render police or fire protection to religious groups. Policemen who helped parishioners into their places of worship would violate the Constitution. . . . A fastidious atheist or agnostic could even object to the supplication with which the Court opens each session: “God save the United States and this Honorable Court.”²²

Hence, rather than a bright line rule, the so-called “wall” separating church and state “is a blurred, indistinct, and variable barrier depending on all the circumstances of a particular relationship,”²³ and the location of the line separating church and state must be determined on a case-by-case basis.²⁴ Accordingly, a *strict* separation between church

¹⁸Act of March 2, 1799, ch. XXIV, 1 Stat. 709 (requiring commanders of ships with chaplains on board “to take care[] that divine service be performed twice a day, and the sermon preached on Sundays”); Act of March 23, 1800, ch. XXXIII, 2 Stat. 45 (directing commanders of ships to require the ship’s crew “to attend at every performance of the worship of Almighty God”).

¹⁹*Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783, 790 (1983) (citation omitted); *see also* *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp.*, 299 U.S. 304, 328 (1936) (noting that understanding “placed upon the Constitution . . . by the men who were contemporary with its formation” is “almost conclusive”) (citation omitted).

²⁰*Curtiss-Wright*, 299 U.S. at 338. In other words, just because government gives a religious accommodation does not mean that secular groups must also receive some sort of benefit or accommodation.

²¹343 U.S. 306 (1952).

²²*Id.* at 312–13; *see also id.* at 314 (noting “no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion and to throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence”).

²³*Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 614 (1971).

²⁴*Id.*

and state has *never* been required in the United States and is *not required now*. As such, Mr. Weinstein errs as a matter of law in concluding that the phrase “so help me God” is *ipso facto* unconstitutional.

That is especially true in this matter. First, no cadet is compelled to recite the phrase, and failure to recite the phrase results in no penalty. Second, the phrase establishes no religion. In fact, the phrase is no more onerous to the Constitutional rights of Air Force Academy cadets than is the phrase, “In God We Trust,” on the currency they receive in payment for their military service. From the very beginning, this has been an artificial crisis wholly contrived by individuals in the MRFF who are hostile or hypersensitive to any and every example of religious expression in the military (no matter what the source of such expression).

Mr. Weinstein and His Agenda

Although Mr. Weinstein and his organization have every right to espouse the views they do, such views do not necessarily align with what the Constitution and laws of the United States require or allow. Accordingly, it is imperative that the officers at the Air Force Academy, in particular, and in the Air Force, in general, be aware of who Mr. Weinstein is and what his underlying agenda entails.

Mr. Weinstein is a self-described opponent of so-called “Dominionist Christians” in the military. He has repeatedly claimed that he is fighting “a subset of Evangelical Christianity that goes by a long technical name . . . Pre-Millennial, Dispensational, Reconstructionist, Dominionist, Fundamentalist, Evangelical Christianity.”²⁵ Moreover, how Mr. Weinstein describes his organization, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), also says much about his beliefs and how he approaches those with whom he disagrees. He describes the MRFF as follows: “We are a weapon. We’re a militant organization. Our job is to kick ass, take names, lay down a withering field of fire, and leave sucking chest wounds on this unconstitutional heart of darkness, if you will, this imperious fascistic contagion of unconstitutional triumphalism.”²⁶ He has demonstrated open and continuing hostility to Evangelical Christians and their message and admits that he is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve his ends: “*I don’t want to be on the losing side knowing that I didn’t use every last diatribe and embellishment and wild-eyed, hair-on-fire, foaming-at-the-mouth harangue to get my point across . . .*”²⁷

²⁵Although Mr. Weinstein has frequently said that his attacks are aimed solely at a very small slice of Evangelical Christianity (as described in the foregoing text), that claim is belied by a presentation he gave at the United States Air Force Academy in April 2008 where he attempted to show a portion of a virulently anti-Catholic movie entitled *The Sword of Constantine*. Luchina Fisher, ‘*Constantine’s Sword*’ Cuts into Anti-Semitism, ABC NEWS (Apr. 20, 2008), <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/story?id=4684837&page=1#.T0QKSlcgdcI>. By seeking to attack the Catholic Church as well, Mr. Weinstein demonstrated a broad-based hostility to Christianity in general, which no U.S. Government official should tolerate.

²⁶Brian Kesge, *An Interview with Mikey Weinstein*, JEWS IN GREEN (Aug. 24, 2007), <http://www.jewsingreen.com/2007/08/an-interview-with-mikey-weinstein/>.

²⁷MICHAEL WEINSTEIN & DAVIN SEAY, WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE 129 (2006) (emphasis added).

A few examples should suffice to demonstrate the nature of Mr. Weinstein's beliefs and the approach he takes to those with whom he disagrees. Mr. Weinstein frequently singles out those whose views he dislikes, accuses them of religious bigotry, and demands that such persons be "disinvited" from activities sponsored by the military. For example, in April 2010, Mr. Weinstein demanded that Reverend Franklin Graham be disinvited from being the keynote speaker at the Pentagon National Day of Prayer prayer breakfast. Reverend Graham, son of Evangelist Billy Graham, is a well-known Evangelical religious figure whose ministry, Samaritan's Purse, provides aid to needy persons around the globe, *irrespective of their religious faith*.²⁸ Mr. Weinstein accused Reverend Graham of being "an Islamophobe, an anti-Muslim bigot, and an international representative of the scourge of fundamentalist Christian supremacy and exceptionalism."²⁹ Mr. Weinstein's complaint was not based on what Reverend Graham planned to say at the prayer breakfast, but instead on comments Reverend Graham had made shortly after 9/11 concerning Islam of which Mr. Weinstein disapproved. Claims about other's bigotry are commonplace with Mr. Weinstein and the MRFF.

Mr. Weinstein's rhetorical attacks, though predominantly aimed at Christians, are not limited solely to Christians. For example, he has readily attacked Jews with whom he disagrees as well. For example, Mr. Weinstein attacked the Jewish War Veterans (JWV) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) as follows when they did not react as he thought they should have reacted regarding an assault on a Jewish recruit at Fort Benning, Georgia: "The JWV has no spine. . . . They haven't reached out at all; they seem to have no balls whatsoever. Somehow I think they and the ADL, Abe Foxman, have confused circumcision with castration. . . ."³⁰ Similarly, in reaction to the advice given by a civilian rabbi to a Jewish chaplain at Hunter Army Airfield with which he disagreed, Mr. Weinstein opined as follows concerning the rabbi who gave the advice: "Here's my response to Rabbi Lapp. First of all, that isn't his name. I'm changing his name officially to Rabbi Lapp-dog. He's a disgrace as an American citizen. He's a disgrace as a Jew. If I saw him, I'd spit in his face. The only thing I know that he can do is reflect light, circulate blood and breathe. . . . What he did with Rabbi Goldman, as far as I'm

²⁸See *About Us*, SAMARITAN'S PURSE, http://www.samaritanspurse.org/index.php/Who_We_Are/About_Us (last visited Feb. 21, 2012) ("The story of the Good Samaritan . . . gives a clear picture of God's desire for us to help those in desperate need wherever we find them. After describing how the Samaritan rescued a hurting man whom others had passed by, Jesus told His hearers, 'Go and do likewise.' . . . For over 40 years, Samaritan's Purse has done our utmost to follow Christ's command by going to the aid of the world's poor, sick, and suffering.").

²⁹MICHAEL WEINSTEIN & DAVIN SEAY, *NO SNOWFLAKE IN AN AVALANCHE* 169 (2012) (internal citation omitted) [hereinafter *NO SNOWFLAKE*]. See also *id.* at 165 (quoting Franklin Graham as saying "[T]here are millions of wonderful Muslim people. And I love them. I have friends that are Muslims and I work in those countries. But I don't agree with the teachings of Islam and I find it to be a very violent religion.").

³⁰Kesge, *supra* note 26.

concerned, makes him like a *kapo* in Auschwitz.”³¹ Such language and vitriol are the norm in Mr. Weinstein’s frequent tirades.

Just over one year ago, Mr. Weinstein publicly mocked retiring Air Force Chief of Staff, General Norton A. Schwartz, for failing to accomplish during his tenure in that office everything that Mr. Weinstein had demanded.³² Referring to him derisively as “Norty,” Mr. Weinstein accused General Schwartz of “unconscionable malfeasance and misfeasance” in office. He also accused General Schwartz of “pitiful acts of betrayal.”³³ He characterized General Schwartz’s accomplishments as Air Force Chief of Staff as a “gutless legacy.”³⁴ Mr. Weinstein continued in like vein throughout his editorial. Near the end, he concluded by saying: “Norty, you’re not just a liar. You’re a damned liar.”³⁵

As one can see from the foregoing, Mr. Weinstein is rightly known for making bombastic, over-the-top statements about those—*Christians and non-Christians alike*—who disagree with his views and his personal ideas on what constitutes acceptable speech and conduct under the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Mr. Weinstein and the MRFF routinely use bigoted, over-the-top language as they accuse *others* of making offensive and bigoted comments. Without citing a single example of any military leader in any U.S. Service who has espoused the view that the U.S. military should be controlled by any (much less by a particular) religious group, Mr. Weinstein nonetheless compares Christian believers with whom he disagrees to al-Qaeda and the Taliban: “We’re fighting al-Qaeda, we’re fighting the Taliban, and we’re turning our own military into that exact same thing.”³⁶ Mr. Weinstein continues: “[W]e’ve lost the Marine Corps, we’ve lost the Army, we’ve lost the Navy and the Air Force.”³⁷ Assuming Mr. Weinstein’s claims to be even remotely true, one wonders where all the forced conversions are that such a view implies.

Not only are the above claims utter nonsense, they are also a direct (and, we should think, from the Air Force Academy’s perspective, an *improper*) public indictment of the civilian and uniformed leadership of the U.S. armed forces and of the Department of Defense. When Mr. Weinstein accuses the U.S. military of *favoring* “Dominionist

³¹*Id.* Calling a Jew a “kapo” is the ultimate insult. “Kapos” were Jews who assisted the Nazis in controlling fellow inmates in concentration camps. See *Kapos*, JEWISH VIRTUAL LIBR., <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/kapos.html> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

³²Mikey Weinstein, *Good Riddance to the Air Force’s Religious Intolerance Enabler in Chief*, Aug. 1, 2012, available at <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/10636-good-riddance-to-the-air-forces-religious-intolerance-enabler-in-chief>.

³³*Id.*

³⁴*Id.*

³⁵*Id.*

³⁶MIL. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOUND., http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/Media_video/festival-of-books/index.html (last visited Feb. 27, 2012).

³⁷Mikey Weinstein, “Champion of the First Amendment” Award Acceptance Speech at the 29th Annual Convention of the Freedom from Religion Foundation (Oct. 7, 2006) (transcript available at <http://www.ffrf.org/publications/freethought-today/articles/The-Christianization-of-the-Military/>).

Christians” who, he claims, desire “to subordinate the United States Constitution . . . to their particular worldview of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *he is directly accusing the civilian and uniformed leadership of the respective Services and of the Department of Defense of violating their oaths of office and the Constitution.* He is charging that the Chain of Command is knowingly engaging in unconstitutional conduct. He is making the same charge about Air Force Academy officials regarding the presence of the phrase “so help me God” in this matter.

Among other things, Mr. Weinstein has accused the U.S. military of the “unconstitutional religious rape” of U.S. military personnel. He has asserted that there is “pernicious, perseverant, pervasive, persecution of non-Christians” in the U.S. armed forces. He has referred to the Pentagon as the “Pentecostalgon,”³⁸ an apparent reference to what he believes to be improper religious influence there.

Despite repeated pious declarations that he is fighting for religious tolerance, Mr. Weinstein is in reality a serial purveyor of religious intolerance who repeatedly propagates the outrageous lie that Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians “would willingly, even eagerly, condemn, ostracize and *even put to death* their fellow citizens for praying to the wrong god.”³⁹ He continues in like vein: “I know that they will stop at literally nothing to achieve their ends. *That includes mass murder.*”⁴⁰ Mr. Weinstein claims that “fundamentalist dominionist Christians are willing to kill to achieve their twisted agenda.”⁴¹ Such assertions are not only outrageous—they are absolutely delusional. Finally, despite admitting that he has “doubts over the actual existence of God and an even more abiding skepticism about the claims of organized religion,”⁴² Mr. Weinstein nonetheless expects all of us to simply believe that *he can speak with authority* about what a certain group of *Christians* believes. For example, *without citing any authoritative source (or any other source)*, Mr. Weinstein claims that “Christian fundamentalist dominionists . . . believe that the Bible instructs them *to eradicate all nonbelievers* as a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Christ.”⁴³ Elsewhere, once again without citing any authority to back up his outlandish claim, he alleges that “hardcore fundamentalist Christian elements within every branch of the military [are] intent on creating nothing less than an army of zombie zealots prepared to fight and die *to usher in* the dispensational reign of Jesus Christ on earth.”⁴⁴ Such assertions, bordering on paranoia, are commonplace in Mr. Weinstein’s writings and speeches.

³⁸See, e.g., NO SNOWFLAKE, *supra* note 29, at 15.

³⁹*Id.* at 119 (emphasis added).

⁴⁰*Id.* at 178 (emphasis added).

⁴¹*Id.* at 179.

⁴²*Id.* at 31.

⁴³*Id.* at 197 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴*Id.* at 12 (emphasis added).

CONCLUSION

Mr. Weinstein's numerous, erroneous demands invite extreme caution on the part of all those who are targets of his periodic tirades and who receive his periodic letters, lest the recipients become unwitting pawns in Mr. Weinstein's strategy to eviscerate religious freedom in the Armed Forces. Mr. Weinstein has readily admitted that he values the use of diatribe and embellishment and harangue as tools to get his way. Because Mr. Weinstein is an Air Force Academy graduate, he pays special attention to what transpires there. Accordingly, as Superintendent of the Academy, you will be especially vulnerable to his complaints. He is already publicly suggesting that you are dancing to his tune.⁴⁵

In this matter, the mere presence of the phrase "so help me God" in the Honor Code does not violate the Constitution and laws of the United States. As such, Air Force Academy officials must absolutely reject Mr. Weinstein's imagined Constitutional violation. Yet, be prepared. Once you reject *the truth* as Mr. Weinstein defines it, you, too, will become an active target of his frequent invective.

Sincerely yours,



Jay Alan Sekulow
Chief Counsel



Robert W. Ash
Senior Counsel

⁴⁵*MRFF Featured by Colorado Springs Independent*, MIL. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOUND. (Oct. 21, 2013), http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/press-releases/2013/CSIndy_10-21-13.html (boasting that, after he complained to Air Force Academy officials, it took only "SIXTY EIGHT MINUTES" (capital letters in original) to get you to respond to him about this "religious violation").