



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF EVANGELICAL
CHAPLAIN ENDORSERS (ICECE)
209 Pine Knoll Drive, Suite B, Greenville, SC 29609
Phone 864-268-8707**

May 9, 2013

The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Re: Religious Liberty in the Air Force

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Air Force's recent meeting with Mr. Michael Weinstein is well known. The International Conference of Evangelical Chaplain Endorsers (ICECE) knows Mr. Weinstein is a vigorous advocate of freedom from religion, especially the Christian faith. We understand the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty has requested a meeting with the Air Force to provide a proper view of religious liberty in the military context and ICECE supports the Chaplain Alliance in its defense of religious liberty, a concept enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

ICECE raises a special concern because the report of the meeting with Mr. Weinstein mentioned review of the Air Force's religious tolerance policy. "Tolerance" has no legitimate relationship to religious freedom. Our religious freedom is one of our "certain unalienable rights" endowed by our Creator which the Constitution recognizes and guarantees in the First Amendment. There is nothing for a dissenting opinion to "tolerate". One can only tolerate something which goes against a settled position held by a governing authority. The settled position in this case is religious freedom, which is the rejection of tolerance. The Constitution, recognizing the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God", forbids the Air Force from "tolerating" or not tolerating specific religious expressions or beliefs.

We suggest the Air Force adopt a policy embracing the religious freedom established in our Constitution, which includes the freedom to believe as does Mr. Weinstein or not to believe at all.

Sincerely,

James F. Poe
CAPT, CHC, USN, Ret.
ICECE Chairman