



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS
WASHINGTON, DC

21 August 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MAJCOM-FOA-DRU/HC

FROM: HQ USAF/HC

SUBJECT: OSD Announcement on Same-sex Married Couples

On 26 Jun 13, the Supreme Court ruled Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional. The Office of the Secretary of Defense announced on 14 Aug 13 that same-sex married couples in the military would be entitled to all the same benefits and services as any other married couple in the military effective 3 Sep 13. There are legal, ecclesial, and pastoral considerations for us as we care for same-sex married couples beginning 3 September. With that in mind we have been preparing guidance to assist Chaplain Corps leaders. As we prepare this guidance we have been in dialogue with several MAJCOM/HCs and with AF/JA. We also welcome input from the wings as well as the MAJCOM/HCs. Direct your comments and questions through your MAJCOM/HC office to HCX.workflow@pentagon.af.mil.

Chaplain Stendahl has provided an initial vector on ministry to same-sex couples as we prepare this guidance. He expects members of the Chaplain Corps to treat everyone with respect and hospitality. At the same time, we will not ask any chaplain to do anything contrary to his/her endorsement. Our expectation is that wing chaplains and NCOICs will lead their teams in a way that will honor both parts of this vector. While we will provide additional guidance before 3 September, the guidance you receive may not provide the kind of very specific, tactical directives that some of you may want. Any guidance we send will still require senior RSTs to lead their teams to answer difficult questions in a way that respects a chaplain's obligation to his/her endorser, is respectful and hospitable in our care for Airmen and their families, and is legal.

I encourage MAJCOM RSTs and wing-level senior RSTs to begin now talking with your teams about this issue. What is your chaplains' understanding of their endorsers' expectations with regard to ministry to same-sex couples (marriage ceremonies, MarriageCare retreats, etc.)? I encourage everyone to take a calm, well-advised and grace-filled approach on this. Chaplain Stendahl and I are praying the Lord will give us wisdom in this matter. I urge all to follow his example in recognizing our dependence on God for wisdom and giving thanks for how we have been blessed by the hospitality the Lord and others have shown us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bobby V. Page".

BOBBY V. PAGE
Chaplain, Brigadier General, USAF
Deputy Chief of Chaplains