

From: Christensen, Nathan LCDR OSD PA [<mailto:Nathan.Christensen@osd.mil>]
Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2013 9:34 AM
Subject: Statement on Religious Proselytizing

Press colleagues,

The below is for your use on the record, attributable to me, Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, a DoD Spokesman.

"The U.S. Department of Defense has never and will never single out a particular religious group for persecution or prosecution. The Department makes reasonable accommodations for all religions and celebrates the religious diversity of our service members.

Service members can share their faith (evangelize), but must not force unwanted, intrusive attempts to convert others of any faith or no faith to one's beliefs (proselytization).

If a service member harasses another member on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability, then the commander takes action based on the gravity of the occurrence. Likewise, when religious harassment complaints are reported, commanders take action based on the gravity of the occurrence on a case by case basis.

The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the Military Services to observe the tenets of their respective religions and respects (and supports by its policy) the rights of others to their own religious beliefs, including the right to hold no beliefs. The Department does not endorse any one religion or religious organization, and provides free access of religion for all members of the military services.

We work to ensure that all service members are free to exercise their Constitutional right to practice their religion -- in a manner that is respectful of other individuals' rights to follow their own belief systems; and in ways that are conducive to good order and discipline; and that do not detract from accomplishing the military mission."

Best,
Nate

Very respectfully,
LCDR Nate Christensen
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