



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII
BOX 63002 KANEHOHE BAY HAWAII 96863-3002

5720/1
CO
October 9, 2015

Mr. Michael Weinstein
Military Religious Freedom Foundation
13170-B Central Avenue, SE
Suite 255
Albuquerque, NM 87123

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

SUBJECT: SIGN LOCATED AT E STREET & 2nd STREET ABOARD MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII

This letter is in response to your interest in the sign located aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii at the corner of E Street and 2nd Street. This sign will remain in its present location and not be altered in any way. The following paragraphs will address your points and explain how we have come to this decision.

Our legal team has conducted exhaustive research on this issue. Several Supreme Court cases and other federal cases, to include the 9th Circuit, support the conclusion that the message on the sign does not violate the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. "God bless" is commonly used in our culture in a number of contexts and there are numerous references to God in this nation's symbols, songs, mottos, and oaths. This sign has the secular purpose of conveying a message of support, does not advance or inhibit religion or any particular faith, nor does it foster excessive government entanglement with religion.

To date, we have not received any direct complaints concerning this sign from service members or reports of service member complaints through any official chain of command. We will always support all service members' rights to pursue and practice their own belief sets, whether religious or not.

The message on this particular sign was driven by support of service members who were soon to deploy in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001. The message on this sign has been in place for well over a decade - serving as a secular symbol of general support and encouragement to "military members, their families, and the civilians who work with them." We will continue to honor those who have sacrificed their lives in defense of this country, our freedoms, and our way of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. C. Killeen".

S. C. KILLEEN
Commanding Officer