



California Council of Churches **IMPACT**

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February 18, 2019

The Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser
Executive Director

TO: Lt. General Jay Silveria
USAFA
Colorado Springs, CO

Elizabeth Sholes
Director of Public Policy

Dear Lt. General Silveria:

Kendra Lewis
Director of Development

California Church IMPACT represents 5500 congregations with 1.5 million members within the mainline Protestant communities of faith. Our collective representation is 6.5 million in CA alone. Our core principle is justice for all people. We thus are guided by Galatians 3:28 "There is no longer Jew or Greek...slave or free...male or female" that defines equality before God.

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African Methodist
Episcopal Church

•
African Methodist Episcopal
Zion Church

•
American Baptist Churches

•
Armenian Church of America

•
Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church

•
Churches of the Brethren

•
Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

•
Community of Christ

•
The Episcopal Church

•
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

•
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

•
Greek Orthodox Church

•
Independent Catholic
Churches International

•
Metropolitan Community Church

•
Moravian Church in America

•
National Baptist Convention

•
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

•
Reformed Church in America

•
Swedenborgian Church

•
United Church of Christ

•
United Methodist Church

•
Church Women United

•
Orthodox Clergy Council

We also believe in our Constitution that defines equality in both the 4th and 14th Amendment and that is affirmed in the Declaration of Independence. These principles are upheld in Supreme Court rulings time and again, most recently in ruling on full equality in marriage for LGBT people. We celebrate this affirmation.

Into these, our core faith principles, comes word that your National Character and Leadership Symposium is inviting Chick-Fil-A's Rodney Bullard as motivational speaker. We must protest this decision and ask that you disinvite him. The company and its foundation have made opposing gender-identity equality a major part of their work. They continue to do so despite reputed changes of heart. We know them by their actions, and we therefore support the Military Religious Freedom Foundation's call to have our tax-supported, citizen enrolled US Air Force Academy distance itself from bias.

Your invitation dishonors our LGBT service members plus the breadth of the faith community's commitment to diversity and equality. Bullard's exalted status at NCLS lifts up a biased speaker as someone you wish our upcoming military leaders to emulate. Bias is not a worthy goal. You need to respect this nation's growing commitment to full inclusion of all people and not regress to bigotry and narrow thinking about who is worthy. Anyone who is at USAFA and who serves in any of our services deserves to be respected **without reservation**. Mr. Bullard sends a very disturbing message that bias and discrimination are all right. They are not.

Please disinvite Mr. Bullard. It is the honorable thing to do.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sholes
Director of Public Policy