

Veterans Affairs asks staff to report anti-Christian bias

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—Department of Veteran Affairs Secretary Douglas Collins has instructed the agency’s employees to report any instances of anti-Christian bias, including any policies that are “hostile to Christian views” or punishments for displaying Christian symbols.

“The VA Task Force now requests all VA employees to submit any instance of anti-Christian discrimination to Anti-ChristianBiasReporting@va.gov,” Collins wrote in an email to employees April 22. “Submissions should include sufficient identifiers such as names, dates, and locations.”

Those submissions will be given to a VA task force set up in response to an executive order from President Donald Trump on eradicating anti-Christian bias, according to that email.

The email from Collins, a former Southern Baptist pastor and Air Force chaplain turned politician, lists 11 kinds of bias or discrimination—three of which specifically name Christianity—ranging from retaliation in response to requests for religious holidays or religious accommodations to discipline against chaplains in response to their sermons.

The email also says the task force will “review all instances of anti-Christian bias” but makes no mention of how to report discrimination of any other faiths.

Trump set up task force on anti-

Christian bias

In his executive order, Trump set up a Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias in the Justice Department, which included the attorney general and members of Trump's Cabinet. Like Collins' order, it makes no mention of any other faiths by name.

"My Administration will ensure that any unlawful and improper conduct, policies, or practices that target Christians are identified, terminated, and rectified," Trump wrote in his order.

That Justice Department task force held its first meeting on Tuesday. During the meeting, U.S. Attorney General Pamela Bondi said Christians were "abused and targeted" during the Biden Administration, pointing to a controversial FBI memo about traditional Catholics as well as to the conviction of anti-abortion protesters.

"Together, this task force will identify any unlawful anti-Christian policies, practices or conduct across the government, seek input from the faith based organizations and state governments to end anti-Christian bias, find and fix deficiencies in existing and regulatory practices that might contribute to the anti-Christian bias," Bondi said in opening the task force meeting, according to a recording posted on her social media.

In a post on X following the task force meeting, Jenny Korn of the White House Faith Office, said that the administration would "protect all faiths" and would "protect Christians, not punish them."

The VA media relations office did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday afternoon.

Earlier this month, Politico reported the State Department had sent out similar instructions on how to report anti-Christian bias.

Amanda Tyler, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, expressed concerns with the focus on anti-Christian bias but not religious liberty when Trump issued his executive order in early February.



Amanda Tyler

“We have strong concerns that this new task force could be weaponized to enforce a theological conformity that will harm everyone’s religious freedom, including those of Christians,” she said.

“Today’s action is consistent with inflaming the completely unfounded claims of rampant Christian persecution in a majority-Christian nation.”

Hemant Mehta, an atheist blogger and activist, first reported Collins’ email on social media, followed by the Federal News Network.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This article was updated at 3 p.m. on April 23 when RNS provided additional comments from Attorney General Pamela Bondi and Jenny Korn of the White House Faith Office.