

## **‘I cannot answer your question:’ Air Force Sgt. says lesbian commander booted him**

**A 19-year U.S. Air Force veteran is speaking out after he was allegedly punished by a lesbian commander at Lackland Air Force Base for his personal views on same-sex “marriage.”**

Chad Groening (OneNewsNow.com) Tuesday, August 20, 2013

Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Monk says he returned from a deployment to discover his new training squadron commander, Major Elisa Valenzuela, is a lesbian.

The senior master sergeant says he and the major disagreed over the issue of same-sex marriage, when Monk was told to punish a staff sergeant who had shared his own religious views in a classroom setting with trainees.

Major Valenzuela wanted the staff sergeant to be severely punished for expressing religious objections to homosexuality, and in the course of that discussion Monk admitted to his commander that he also has a moral objection to same-sex marriage. “And I was being essentially evaluated as if I had to agree as a condition of employment,” Monk tells OneNewsNow. “I was weighed. I was measured. I was found unfit for my position. And for all intents and purposes, she punished me.”

Monk told *Military Times* that he and Major Valenzuela had a “very, very contentious” discussion over the issue, with his commander pressing him to agree with her that opposing “gay marriage” is discrimination. Monk’s response to her: “I cannot answer your question because of my convictions,” he told the military newspaper.

A spokeswoman for the training wing told *Military Times* that Monk was “not removed from duty,” and said he has been reassigned to another position elsewhere on the Texas air base. Monk told the *Times* that he was due for a reassignment but said the disagreement with the lesbian major forced him to be abruptly removed from his leadership position on July 26. He had to seek permission to return to his unit to retrieve personal items, he said. “I was relieved of my position because I do not agree with my commander’s position on gay marriage,” he told the military newspaper.

A religious liberty law firm, [Liberty Institute](#), is representing the airman. Attorney Mike Berry of Liberty Institute says the military branches have reached a point where there is a “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in the military for Christians who support traditional values.

Liberty Institute, quoting Monk, reported that the lesbian major once referred to a base chaplain as a “bigot” because he preaches that homosexuality is a sin. “We are apparently now at the point where a Christian is not allowed to vocalize his Christianity,” says Berry. “And that’s in direct violation of Defense Department and Air Force regulations. That’s what’s happened in this case.”

Monk has been transferred to a medical wing at Lackland AFB and received a letter of counseling, an official notice of infraction...

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