

How You Can Help

(1) Get Active - there are many opportunities for you to become involved with the supporting the religious rights of our veterans and their families. Please visit our website today to learn more about what you can do to help.

(2) Educate Others - about the issue of the VA's discrimination against our Wiccan veterans and urge them to express their concerns about the need for equal treatment for veterans of all religions.

(3) Make a Donation - to the Upper Midwest Pagan Alliance to help cover costs of printing, events, and other expenses we are incurring to support this effort.

(5) Stay Informed - by signing up for our email alert list. This is the best way of keeping up to date on the latest developments in this historic struggle for religious freedom.

Thank you very much for your support.

"All of our troops who sacrifice their lives fighting for our country deserve nothing less than to be properly recognized."

I will continue to work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that this issue is addressed at the federal level."

- Senator Harry Reid
US Senate Majority Leader

For more information visit:
UMPaganAlliance.com

Who We Are:

The Upper Midwest Pagan Alliance is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting religious tolerance and accommodation through public education and grassroots community activities.

Our Brave Soldiers Fight to Defend **YOUR FREEDOM!**



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Now It's Your Turn!

The Situation

For the past several years, the Department of Veteran's Affairs has been actively pursuing policies that are discriminatory and harmful to both our veterans and our Constitutional rights. Specifically, when it comes to allowing emblems of faith to be placed on the headstones of deceased veterans, the VA has been denying religious accommodation to adherents of the Wiccan faith.

Although the VA has approved the emblems of 38 other religions and belief systems to be placed on the headstones of deceased veterans, it refuses to approve the use of the Wiccan symbol—an interlaced five pointed star within a circle.

Current Faith Groups for Which the VA has Approved Emblems of Belief

- Christian Cross
- Buddhist Wheel
- Hebrew Star of David
- Presbyterian Cross
- Russian Orthodox Cross
- Lutheran Cross
- Episcopal Cross
- Unitarian Universalist
- United Methodist Church
- Aaronic Order Church
- Mormon
- Native American Church
- Serbian Orthodox
- Greek Cross
- Bahai
- Atheist
- Muslim Crescent & Star
- Hindu
- Konko-Kyo
- Community of Christ
- Sufism Reoriented
- Tenrikyo Church
- Seicho-No-Ie
- Church of World Messianity
- Church of Religious Science
- Christian Reformed Church
- United Moravian Church
- Eckankaar
- Christian Church
- Christian & Missionary Alliance
- United Church of Christ
- Humanist
- Presbyterian Church
- Izumo Taishakyo Mission
- Soka Gakkai Int'l
- Sikh (Khanda)
- Christain Scientist
- Muslim Circle & Star

The Issue

The VA does not have the authority to determine Constitutional issues, let alone to pick and to choose which religions they will assign legitimacy. For them to do so is blatant discrimination and an abuse of power.

Both the federal and state courts of this country, in keeping with the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, have recognized Wicca as a legitimate religion deserving of all protections set forth in the First Amendment.

[Dettmer v. Landon, 617 F.Supp. 592 (E. Dst. Va. 1985), affirmed on appeal, 799 F.2d 929 (1986). Roberts v. Ravenwood Church of Wicca, 249 Ga. 348 (1982).]

The United States military courts have also found Wicca to be a bona fide religion meritorious of First Amendment protections.

[United States v. Phillips, 42 M.J. 346 (1995); and 38 M.J. 642. Dept. of the Army (DA) Pamphlet 165-13-1, (1980)]

“Wicca is a socially recognized religion. It is acknowledged as such by the Army. Further, it is acknowledged as such in courts of law.”

*- Federal Court Judge Robert Wiss
U.S. v. Phillips, 42 M.J. 346*

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has a duty, an obligation, and a legal responsibility to add the Wiccan symbol to their list of approved emblems, and the fact that they are refusing to do so is appalling and sets a very dangerous precedent of government-sanctioned discrimination on the basis of religion.

Why You Should Care

Religious freedom is one of the fundamental principles set forth in the US Constitution, along with other protected freedoms, such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

When any of these freedoms are threatened, the very basis of the American way of life is in danger, and this needs to be taken seriously.

The VA's refusal to allow the Wiccan Pentacle as a recognized religious symbol is a direct violation of the US Constitution and is a flagrant case of religious discrimination.

To maintain a free society, it is important for all of us to stand up to injustice and to do our part to uphold the freedoms guaranteed to us by the founders of this nation.

When the founders of this country wrote the language in our Constitution which guaranteed the freedom of religion, they did not add a parenthetical phrases saying “Except for Wiccans.” They did not reserve religious freedom to only large and powerful religions, and they did not reserve religious freedom to only those religions with which everyone was familiar.

Our veterans put their lives on the line so that all of us can enjoy the freedom to worship, speak, and think as we wish. If we don't honor our veterans by allowing them to display the symbol of their faith, we make a mockery of the freedoms we claim to hold dear.

We cannot let that happen. Please join us in urging the VA to uphold the constitution and to approve the Wiccan symbol for our veterans.