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SAME SEX MARRIAGE AND RELATED ACTIVITIES.

January 27, 2014

From: The Office of the Ecclesiastical Endorser, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

Subject: Policy Statement and Guidelines to Chaplains Regarding Responds to the Supreme Court Ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act and Subsequent Office of the Secretary of Defense Announcements on Same-Gender Couples.

On June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court of the United States deemed unconstitutional Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which states “the word ‘marriage’ means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word ‘spouse’ refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife.” On August 14, 2013, the Office of Secretary of Defense announced that same-gender married couples serving in the military would be entitled to receive all benefits pertinent to married couples, effective September 3, 2013.

The Office of the National Baptist Ecclesiastical Endorser recognizes and supports the rights of all people to make social and legal decisions based upon their own personal convictions, teachings, and understanding of Local, State, and Federal law. In all matters of Faith and Practice, National Baptists are guided by Holy Scriptures. Genesis 2: 18-25 shows God’s concern for relationships by creating the woman to be a partner with man.

National Baptist Endorsed Chaplains, although serving in a pluralistic environment, are not to participate in any activity that implies or condones same sex marriage or same sex union. When the Chaplain is not able to perform specific rites and services because of conflict with Bible teachings, and with their own denominational faith and practice, they will make every effort to provide for the free exercise of religion with space and resources in keeping with military regulations and federal law.