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IN the news

ACLJ: More Than 200,000 Americans Urge President Bush to Protect Prayer by Military Chaplains

January 11, 2006

(Washington, DC) – The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), specializing in constitutional law, said today its national petition campaign urging President Bush to protect the constitutional rights of military chaplains has now topped more than 200,000 names. The ACLJ petition campaign is in conjunction with efforts underway in Congress – spearheaded by Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC) – urging President Bush to enact an Executive Order that clears the way for chaplains to pray according to their faith.

“It is extremely encouraging that so many Americans understand the important role our military chaplains play in providing comfort and spiritual support for our men and women in the military,” said Jay Sekulow, Chief Counsel of the ACLJ who is working with members of Congress on this issue. “The fact that more than 200,000 people nationwide signed on to our petition urging President Bush to act on behalf of our military chaplains sends a powerful message to the White House – a clear message that chaplains have a constitutional right to adhere to the religious expressions of their faith and exercise them freely. It is unacceptable that there is pressure inside the military to censor chaplains and prevent them to pray according to their faith. The President can take action to change that. We are hopeful the President will enact an Executive Order protecting military chaplains.”

As of today, the ACLJ has collected 203,149 names in a national petition campaign launched in conjunction with a Congressional effort to see the Commander and Chief promptly resolve any uncertainty in this area.

In expressing concern about the proposed Air Force restrictions on military prayer for chaplains – restrictive guidelines that could be implemented throughout the Department of Defense – Rep. Jones sent a letter to President Bush in October requesting that the President “protect by Executive Order the constitutional right of military chaplains to pray according to their faith.”



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"I am so grateful to the ACLJ for their continued efforts in drawing attention to this cause," said Rep. Jones. "Over the past couple months, more military chaplains have courageously stepped forward – many of them jeopardizing their careers – to confirm that the suppression of religious freedom is a pervasive problem. Military chaplains throughout our Armed Services are being instructed on what to say when they pray, and the chaplains who adhere to the tenants of their faith by praying in the name of their Creator - as is their First Amendment right - are being unduly reprimanded. We must persevere in our efforts to successfully communicate with the President the urgency and importance of this issue."

In addition to its work in support of military prayer, the ACLJ also provided the Air Force with a legal analysis of proposed guidelines concluding that Air Force chaplains – and all military chaplains – have a constitutional right to pray according to their faith.

Led by Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow, the ACLJ specializes in constitutional law and is based in Washington, D.C.

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The ACLJ's national petition campaign to urge President Bush to protect prayer by military chaplains continues to generate support and the nomination of Judge Alito to the Supreme Court is about to take center stage.

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