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Friday, January 27, 2006

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## JONES RENEWS CALL FOR PRESIDENT TO PROTECT MILITARY CHAPLAINS' FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

Washington, D.C. — In a letter today to President Bush, Third District Representative Walter B. Jones (R-NC) renewed his call for the President to protect the constitutional right of military chaplains to pray according to their faith.

“As you know, two months ago 71 members of the House and three senators sent you a letter expressing our concern that military chaplains’ right to pray according to their faith is in jeopardy,” Congressman Jones wrote. “A week after we released our letter, Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) also addressed this concern in a personal letter to you. On December 21, 2005, 29 groups — representing millions of Americans — also issued you a letter voicing their concern over the chaplain issue.”

“Over the past two 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,” Jones continued. “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.”

“I commend you for recently urging the government of China to not fear people of faith, and for reminding China that a healthy society provides a protective environment for people to express themselves through worshipping their creator. As you are aware, the U. S. State Department recently listed China as one of eight nations that constitutes a ‘particular concern’ for denying religious freedom,” Jones wrote. “It is imperative that the United States continues to lead and promote religious freedom at home and internationally. Your words addressing the suppression of religious freedom come at an opportune time not only for China, but here at home. Mr. President, we must preserve our military chaplains’ first amendment right.”

“Since the inception of our nation’s military, chaplains have played an integral role in fulfilling the spiritual and emotional needs of the brave men and women who serve — and they have always prayed according to their faith tradition. As


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you continue to address the global problem of religious persecution, we once again request that you issue an Executive Order to end the religious discrimination and persecution of our U. S. military chaplains. It is in the best interest of our Armed Services and this nation to guarantee the constitutional right of military chaplains to pray according to their faith," Jones concluded.

For additional information or to schedule an interview with Congressman Walter B. Jones please contact Kathleen Joyce at (202) 225-3415.

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