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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 27, 2010

Committee On Appropriations
Ranking Member, Agriculture Subcommittee
Defense Subcommittee

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The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2184 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Skelton,

I am deeply concerned about the issue of clerical censorship within the Department of Defense. Two recent events highlight this disconcerting trend. In February of this year, Tony Perkins saw his invitation to be the keynote speaker at the National Prayer Luncheon at Andrews Air Force Base withdrawn. The stated excuse was that Mr. Perkin's beliefs on repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell were offensive to some. Last week, Franklin Graham was uninvited from speaking at the Pentagon in celebration of the National Day of Prayer, ostensibly for statements he has made about Islam. Both individuals were simply stating their beliefs, based on the teachings of the Bible.

Political correctness and placating all religious views in the military community have had the effect of marginalizing our military chaplains. The simple fact is that sometimes Biblically-based ideas may run afoul of the approved politically correct message. The purpose of military chaplains is to first and foremost serve the spiritual needs of military members and their families. Being a chaplain is an inherently religious activity; to make it subject to politically correct sensitivities renders military chaplains ineffective. A Christian chaplain should be able to share the teachings and beliefs presented in the Bible, a simplistic concept that seems obvious but is currently under attack by the Pentagon.

I request that your committee hold a hearing on this important issue. Our troops deserve religious care unencumbered by political correctness.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Kingston".
Jack Kingston
Member of Congress