

HOUSE CHAPLAIN ISSUE BECOMES HOUSE OF LIES

In yesterday's edition of *Roll Call*, it was reported that Rev. Billy Graham "called the Speaker [Dennis Hastert] on Monday and urged him not to abandon the Chaplain candidate [Rev. Charles Wright]." The story said that Hastert was "under pressure from the Rev. Billy Graham" to stick by Rev. Wright.

Now an AP story today reports that Larry Ross, a spokesman for Graham, says that Rev. Graham's "response was he did not and could not take sides on this issue." He continued by saying "Any inference that he did take sides was a misunderstanding of a private phone call between Mr. Graham and the speaker." The story also says that the minister was "only returning a call from Hastert and did not specifically weigh in on the chaplain issue."

To make matters more complicated, AP says that John Feehery, spokesman for Hastert, insists that Graham "did express support" for Rev. Wright and that Hastert never called Graham.

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this latest controversy in the House Chaplain issue today:

"*Roll Call* did not err in its story. We know this because we independently learned that House Speaker Dennis Hastert's office took great delight in telling their supporters that Rev. Billy Graham was lobbying for Rev. Wright. Now Graham denies this happened and even denies making the phone call in the first place.

"The Republicans have built a House of Lies. This latest fiasco is only one chapter in a book of lies that the Republicans have written on this subject. Just ask Father Timothy O'Brien."