

HOUSE CHAPLAIN SELECTION DEMANDS FULL DISCLOSURE

Last week, Rep. John D. Dingell wrote to the Speaker of the House, Rep. Dennis Hastert, calling for the full release of all records, transcripts and other materials relating to the selection of the new House Chaplain. The selection process has been questioned by the Catholic League, and others, because some of the comments made by those involved in the search were troubling. No Catholic has ever been chosen for this job.

At stake is whether anti-Catholic prejudice worked against the selection of Father Timothy O'Brien, the Catholic priest who was chosen first by the search committee and was subsequently recommended along with two other candidates to Rep. Hastert, Rep. Dick Armey and Rep. Dick Gephardt; Rev. Charles Wright, a Presbyterian minister, who placed third in the balloting, was ultimately chosen to fill the post. On January 27, the full House will vote on the new House Chaplain.

Catholic League president William Donohue today backed Rep. Dingell's call for full disclosure:

"In reply to a letter I wrote to all members of the House of Representatives on December 2, Rep. John Dingell requested of Speaker Hastert that he release all documents relating to the selection of the new Chaplain of the House. I was told today by a staff member in Rep. Dingell's office that no reply has been forthcoming.

"The Catholic League fully supports Rep. Dingell's request for full disclosure on this matter and urges all congressmen, Republicans as well as Democrats, to do the same. If anti-Catholic bias was not at work, there is nothing to worry about. But if it was, every House member has a duty to take this into account when the vote is taken.

“For the record, the Catholic League favors neither Republican nor Democrat. All we care about is rooting out anti-Catholicism.”