

REV. BILLY GRAHAM WRONG ON HOUSE CHAPLAIN ISSUE

As reported in today's edition of *Roll Call*, Rev. Billy Graham has entered the controversy over the new House Chaplain. He reportedly called House Speaker Dennis Hastert on Monday urging him not to abandon Rev. Charles Wright, the candidate who placed third in the selection committee balloting but was nonetheless chosen by Hastert, Rep. Dick Armey and Rep. Dick Gephardt as the nominee (Gephardt wanted Father Timothy O'Brien, the Catholic priest who was the top choice of the selection committee). Graham's wife is a friend of Wright's wife and Hastert and Graham are graduates of Wheaton College.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on Graham's entrance into the fray today:

"Everyone respects Rev. Billy Graham but he is wrong on this issue. The selection process for the new House Chaplain was seriously tainted, so much so that to start *de novo* would make more sense than to simply ratify what has been done. While anyone is free to enter the debate, everyone who does so is morally obliged to weigh the evidence and not simply offer support, or criticism, for the process.

"The Republicans brought this on themselves and by delaying the process they have only turned more people against them. The Catholic League favors neither Republicans nor Democrats and that is why we will not be persuaded by those who advance political arguments asking us to reconsider our position. Justice demands that the selection process be carefully scrutinized by every House member before a final vote is taken."