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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3303

May 2, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am sure you are aware of how disappointed many members are with the forced resignation of Father Patrick Conroy. At the beginning of every Congress since 2011, the House of Representatives has elected him to serve as our chaplain. I am not aware of a single member voting against his election. In my experience, Father Conroy has been a man of faith, integrity, and great counsel to those of us who serve in the House.

Not only was I dismayed that Father Conroy was apparently asked to resign without explanation, I was troubled by the manner in which it was done. All members were not asked for their opinions on the chaplain's performance. Instead, it appears a decision to push him out was made behind closed doors based upon the input of only a few. Furthermore, under the Rules and Manual of the House (p. 365 of House Document 114-192), resignation of a chaplain is subject to acceptance by the House. Father Conroy's forced resignation letter was read by the House Reading Clerk after last votes on Monday night, April 16, 2018. Few members were in the chamber. To my knowledge, none were aware it was coming. After Father Conroy's short, six-sentence letter was read, the Speaker Pro Tempore took less than three seconds to utter six words – "without objection, the resignation is accepted" – and immediately gavelled the matter to a close. From start to finish, the matter took less than a minute. There was no objection quite simply because few members, if any, were both present on the floor and aware of the action taking place to actually voice their disapproval.

With all due respect, that process reflects very poorly on the House. It appears the decision was made to minimize the input of members, and executed surreptitiously to overcome what was likely to be their overwhelming objection. It appears intentionally underhanded, and that is deeply disappointing!

The process also reflects poorly on the Constitution that we have all sworn to uphold. Article I, Section II of the Constitution gives the whole House, not just the Speaker, the right to choose its officers, including the chaplain. That right has essentially been overturned in this instance.

Mr. Speaker, you have an opportunity to revisit this matter, and I respectfully urge you to take it. You can utilize the temporary authority granted by the Legislative Reorganization Act to re-elect Father Conroy to serve the remaining eight months of his term. You could also move a privileged resolution to the floor and allow the House to vote to do the same. Either way, it should be done.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Walter B. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress