PATRICK J. CONROY, S.J.
CHAPLAIN

Office of the Chaplain

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6655

May 3, 2018

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

RE: Immediate retraction of resignation as Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Dear Speaker Ryan:

As you know, by letter of April 15, 2018, I tendered my resignation of the position of Chaplain of the United States House of Representatives (hereinafter "House Chaplain") to you, effective May 24, 2018. At this time, and upon advice of counsel, I hereby retract and rescind said resignation for the reasons that follow.

I was elected as House Chaplain on May 25, 2011, and I have honorably served in that role since that time. I was re-elected House Chaplain in every succeeding Congress. I have never been disciplined, nor reprimanded, nor have I ever heard a complaint about my ministry during my time as House Chaplain. It is my desire to continue to serve as House Chaplain in this 115th United States Congress to the end of my current two-year term, and beyond, unless my services are officially terminated (however that is properly done) or I am not re-elected to the position by the membership of the House.

While you never spoke with me in person, nor did you send me any correspondence, on Friday, April 13th, 2018, your Chief of Staff, Jonathan Burks, came to me and informed me that you were asking for my letter of resignation. I inquired as to whether or not it was "for cause," and Mr. Burks mentioned dismissively something like "maybe it's time that we had a Chaplain that wasn't a Catholic." He also mentioned my November prayer and an interview with the National Journal Daily.

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At that point, I thought that I had little choice but to resign, as my assumption was that you had the absolute prerogative and authority to end my term as House Chaplain.

Recently, on April 27, you publicly indicated that my "pastoral services" to some Members were lacking and that I did not offer adequate "spiritual counseling" to others. This is not the reason that Mr. Burks gave me when asking for my "resignation." In fact, no such criticism has ever been leveled against me during my tenure as House Chaplain. At the very least, if it were, I could have attempted to correct such "faults." In retracting my resignation I wish to do just that.

I also write this letter because I do not wish to have my "resignation" be construed as a "constructive termination." You may wish to outright "fire" me, if you have the authority to do so, but should you wish to terminate my services, it will be without my offer of resignation, as you requested.

Since soon after I submitted my letter of April 15 I chose to remain silent about this matter despite numerous requests from the media. There has been much said in conjecture about my leaving the Chaplain's Office, much of it damaging to the reputation of the House and the integrity of the Office of the Chaplain.

Had I known of any failure in providing my ministry to the House, I would have attempted to make the appropriate adjustments, but in no case would I have agreed to submit a letter of resignation without being given that opportunity. Therefore, I wish to serve the remainder of my term as House Chaplain, unless terminated "for cause." Please be guided accordingly and kindly provide confirmation of your recognition of this letter and my retraction of resignation no later than May 12, 2018. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Conroy, S.J.
Chaplain

CC: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
The Honorable Karen Haas, Clerk of the House
Daniel G.P. Marchese, Esq.

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