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Chaplain endorsers: Obama admin. opposition to religious freedom in military ‘chilling’

WASHINGTON — The Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, an organization of chaplain endorsers representing more than 2,000 current chaplains actively serving the armed forces, is calling on the U.S. House of Representatives to firmly reject President Obama’s attempt to minimize the importance of religious conscience.

Rep. John Fleming (R-LA) authored an amendment to the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act which would ensure religious liberty for service men and women in the armed forces. The House Armed Services Committee approved the amendment last week. President Obama then declared, “The Administration strongly objects to section 530, which would require the Armed Forces to accommodate, except in cases of military necessity, ‘actions and speech’ reflecting the ‘conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs of the member.’”

“The president’s objections to many other provisions of the 2014 NDAA—including Purple Heart awards for Americans wounded by in-U.S. terrorists--demonstrates his utter disdain for the views of elected representatives and endangers the free exercise of religion in the Armed Services,” said retired Chaplain (Brig Gen) Douglas Lee, USAR. “The chilling effect of his current objections on religious conscience are chilling in and of themselves.”

Lee said that the president’s rejection of protections for American religious conscience and First Amendment principles has awakened many to the dangers of his agenda.

“The House must stand firm with its intended NDAA legislation,” he said.

The Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty is an organization of chaplain endorsers, the faith groups that provide chaplains for the U.S. military and other agencies needing chaplains. The endorsers in the Chaplain Alliance speak for more than 2,000 chaplains serving the armed forces.

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