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Congress of the United States
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ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

October 15, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel:

I write to express my grave concern over recent reports that non-active-duty chaplains are barred from engaging in any ministerial activity on base. Not only is their work deemed "non-essential" so as to place them on furlough, but "non-authorized" so as to prevent them from voluntarily ministering on base.

Because of shortages of active-duty chaplains, at over 220 U.S. military installations in 29 countries and 153 VA Medical Centers throughout the U.S., contract chaplains serve our men and women in the Armed Forces and their families. The laws of this nation require the federal government to ensure military personnel can express their faith, or non-faith, in all corners of the world. This is why the military chaplaincy exists.

In an effort to better understand how DOD implemented its plan for dealing with the lapse in appropriations, I respectfully request that you provide detailed responses to the following questions:

- (1) How many members of the Chaplain Corps were immediately furloughed on October 1, 2013?
- (2) As of October 15, 2013, how many members of the Chaplain Corps remain furloughed?
- (3) As of October 15, 2013, how many bases do not have a chaplain on-site?
- (4) What is the oversight policy for ensuring the religious and spiritual needs of service members and their families are met during lapses in appropriations, particularly for those stationed overseas?

The Hon. Chuck Hagel
October 15, 2013

General George Washington issued an order on July 9th, 1776, providing through the Continental Congress for a chaplain for each regiment, stating, "The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary but especially so in times of public distress and danger." I believe DOD must prioritize the spiritual and religious needs of our military men and women and their families, and strive to minimize the impact of the lapse in appropriations on the Chaplain Corps.

I respectfully request that you provide your responses to these questions no later than October 31, 2013. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and timely attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Collins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Doug Collins
Member of Congress
Ninth District of Georgia