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Messrs. FATTAH, PASCRELL, and MORAN of Virginia changed their vote from "aye" to "no."

Messrs. PICKERING, HILLEARY, LEWIS of Kentucky, LIPINSKI, BLAGOJEVICH, BALDACCI, BONILLA, COSTELLO, LARGENT, KILDEE, and Mrs. ROUKEMA changed their vote from "no" to "aye."

Mr. OXLEY changed his vote from "present" to "aye."

So the motion was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) having assumed the chair, Mr. LATOURETTE, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con.Res. 290) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2001, revising the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2000, and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2005, had come to no resolution thereon.

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PERSONAL PRIVILEGE— SELECTION OF HOUSE CHAPLAIN

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of personal privilege.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Based on press accounts examined by the Chair, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) is recognized for 1 hour on a question of personal privilege.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I come to this well today following a long period of prayerful consideration. I want to talk to you about the choice of our next Chaplain, a man whose job it is to ask God's blessing on our work.

When I became your Speaker last year, I stood in this very spot and said that this House needed to heal. Impeachment had hardened the hearts of too many of our Members and ruptured the trust necessary for effective legislating.

Frankly, we had made progress toward that end. We successfully worked together to bring economic security to our country. We worked together to strengthen our schools and our national defense. And, working together, we lowered our rhetoric from this well and we returned some sense of civility to this chamber.

When I first heard that our current Chaplain wanted to retire, I decided I wanted to build on that growing sense of trust. Instead of simply appointing a Chaplain, as some of my predecessors had done, I appointed the largest and most bipartisan search committee in the history of this House.

I want to take a moment to describe that process because it has been much distorted in the last 4 months.

I knew that finding the right person would be difficult. Many religious

faiths are represented in this House, and many of you had candidates you believed would be good for the job.

The Search Committee the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) and I created was asked to review the many applicants and to send to the leadership up to three unranked candidates for final consideration.

I suppose that the committee could have ignored those instructions and sent us only one candidate because they believed he or she far superior, that they stood out above all the other applicants. But they did not.

In fact, I learned early and recently that the search committee discussed that very option and rejected it. Instead, the committee, under the able leadership of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY), a Catholic, and the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY), a Presbyterian, selected three outstanding candidates: Reverend Robert Dvorak, Father Tim O'Brien, and Dr. Charles Wright.

These names were sent to us in alphabetical order. There was no ranking of candidates. There was no first choice of the committee, as some would have the public believe. And, in fact, there could not be a first choice because the committee never set out to select a first choice.

The report to this House by the bipartisan co-chairman of the committee makes this fact abundantly clear. The truth is simple: each of the three candidates was deemed as acceptable to the search committee.

Along with Majority Leader ARMEY and Minority Leader GEPHARDT, I interviewed the three candidates sent to us by the bipartisan search committee. I was looking for a kind person with a caring heart. I was looking for a person who had extensive counseling and pastoral or parish experience. And I was looking for a person who Members of Congress could take their problems to and find reassurance and wisdom.

I was not looking for a particular denomination or faith, and I did not make my selection based on a candidate's religious doctrine or the past history of other House Chaplains. I was trying to be fair to all candidates.

While I found all three candidates to have impressive credentials, I was most impressed with the pastoral experience and personal warmth of Dr. Charles Wright, who for years has ministered to the needs of the Capitol Hill community. And, in addition, he had years of experience in the inner city, as well as the international community. He spent a long time trying to break down the walls of apartheid in South Africa and to seek common understanding between blacks and whites.

I made my selection based on that experience and the qualities that I found in him. No one other than the candidates themselves influenced my decision. Any suggestion to the contrary is simply wrong.

After the interviews and a period of reflection, I consulted with majority

leader and the minority leader twice before I made my final decision.

In the first discussion, one preferred Dr. Wright and one preferred Reverend Dvorak. In the second discussion, one preferred Dr. Wright and one preferred Father O'Brien. The choice was not unanimous. But both signed off on the choice of Dr. Wright, and we issued a joint press release announcing the selection. I thought we had reached consensus.

Following our joint press statement, there were immediate charges of anti-Catholic bigotry. I was surprised and disappointed. Since there was no bias in the decision, I assumed that the disappointment held by some that a Catholic was not chosen would go away when people understood the truth. But I was wrong.

I then thought that once the search committee issued their report and laid out the facts of the selection process that the controversy would be over. Sadly, the facts were ignored and the controversy continued to be stoked.

It was then that I realized that a far more serious effort was afoot. Some were trying to take political advantage out of what was essentially a spiritual decision and charged me with anti-Catholic sentiment.

Is there anti-Catholic sentiment still alive in our country? In fact, is there anti-religious bias alive in our country? Sad as it is to admit, I believe the answer to both these questions may be yes.

This bias comes in many shapes and sizes. Whether it be television shows that hold the church in contempt, the activist who desecrates St. Patrick's Cathedral, or the so-called "artists" who denigrate important religious symbols, my friends, that is anti-Catholic and anti-religious bias.

Certainly, there are those who differ with some of the views held by the Catholic Church; and even some Catholics respectfully disagree with some Church positions.

I agree with the Catholic Church on many things. I agree with the Catholic Church that we should protect the unborn. I agree with the mission of the Catholic schools to help so many Catholic and non-Catholic students get a values-based education.

I wholeheartedly support the Catholic Church's great work to help the poor. And I believe that the Vatican should have a seat at the United Nations.

I have the greatest respect and admiration for the Pope, who has done so much to bring peace to our troubled world and played such a critical role in ending the scourge of communism in Eastern Europe.

I am a patient man. In my role as Speaker of the Whole House, I believe I should try to be especially patient and seek compromise and not confrontation. But even I did not easily take in stride carelessly tossed accusations of bigotry. Where I come from, such slander is an ugly business. I can only conclude that those who accuse me of anti-

Catholic bigotry either do not know me or are maliciously seeking political advantage by making these accusations.

The institution of this House means a great deal to me. I believe each of us, as Members of this House, should look out for this institution and treat it with respect.

As your Speaker, I feel a special burden to do so. It is with that conviction that I say to each of you that I believe the political maneuvering on this issue may have catastrophic unintended consequences, like children playing with matches.

In fact, in light of this controversy, some critics now advocate that we get rid of the Office of the Chaplain altogether. There are editorials being written to that effect in papers around this country. I ask each of you to search your heart: Is that what is good for this institution? I hope your answer is no.

But that, my friends, is where the political games could be taking us. I think to lose the Office of the Chaplain would be a grave mistake. Ever since the first prayer was offered in the Continental Congress on September 7, 1774, 2 years before the Declaration of Independence was written, Congress has been blessed by a daily prayer.

The daily prayer has served as a peaceful refuge for the partisan wrangling. It has bound disparate factions under the unifying theme of God's love.

The first amendment to the Constitution states clearly that "Congress should make no law respecting an establishment of religion." But, at the same time, the rules and precedents of this House say that the Chaplain shall attend at the commencement of the House and open the same with prayer.

These contrary impulses signify two great American themes: Americans should have the freedom to practice any religion they want, but Americans also believe that this Nation was founded under God to fulfill a greater mission.

The House Chaplain must reflect both traditions. The Chaplain of the House must submerge his or her own doctrinal views while reaching out to all Members regardless of religious faith. He must say a prayer that unites us rather than divides us.

Our current House Chaplain, Jim Ford, has blessed us with daily prayers and counseled Members quietly with honesty and integrity.

Jim Ford is a Lutheran, but he does not preach Lutheran doctrine from the House pulpit.

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His message is universal. In fact, Tip O'Neill, an Irish Catholic and our respected former Speaker, often called Jim Ford monsignor as a way to signify his approval of Ford's universal message. I believe that any representative of any religion can provide a similar universal message for the House of Representatives. My support for Charles Wright had nothing to do with

Mr. Wright's denomination or his religious doctrine. Of the three candidates presented to me by the committee, I believed he had the best ability to help the Members of the House based on his extensive experience in counseling. I agree with our colleague Tony Hall, who first suggested to Dr. Wright that he apply, that first and foremost Charles Wright has a pastor's heart.

Sadly, it has become clear that the minority will never support Charles Wright to be the House Chaplain. I have waited more than 4 months in the hope that voices of reason would prevail. Charles Wright is a good and decent man. He would make an excellent chaplain. That is why I asked Leader GEPHARDT to allow him to meet with the Democratic Caucus and that is why our colleague TONY HALL, a man whose respect in this House is unmatched, made the same request. But those requests have not been fulfilled. Instead of hearing the positive voice of a Godly and caring man, the only voices we hear are whispered hints in dark places that his selection is the result of anti-Catholic bias.

My friends, in all my years in this Congress, I have never seen a more cynical and more destructive political campaign. That such a campaign should be waged in connection with the selection of the House Chaplain brings shame on this House.

During the interview process, DICK GEPHARDT explained very eloquently to one of the candidates that democracy was a substitute for war. He was warning the candidate that if he became the Chaplain, his flock would not always behave like folks on a Sunday afternoon picnic. He went on to say that unlike war, where men set out to destroy one another, in a democracy, we were constrained by a set of rules and a common decency. It was a moving and profound observation that I have often thought a lot about. But I must say that the history of this Chaplain issue over the last 4 months does not appear to be constrained by common decency. It looks a lot like war and it has an ugly face.

This institution, so important in the protection of our freedom, is more important than which one of us sits in that chair. In the light of this controversy, Charles Wright has told me that he does not want to serve as Chaplain in a divided House. I reluctantly agreed that I would accept his decision not to be our Chaplain. I regret that decision of Dr. Wright, but I understand it.

So where do we go from here? As Speaker of this whole House, I will act to stop those who want to persist in this unseemly political game. I will not allow this House to be torn apart and the office of Chaplain to be destroyed. Having formally received the resignation of Chaplain Ford, I am today under the authority granted to me under the rules and precedents of this House to fill vacancies naming Daniel Coughlin to serve as Chaplain of the

House. Father Coughlin is the vicar of the Archdiocese of Chicago and comes with the highest recommendations from a man of God for whom I have great respect, my good friend Cardinal George of Chicago. I believe that Daniel Coughlin will bring to the House a caring and a healing heart. He has been a parish priest and spent the past several years counseling parish priests within the Archdiocese. He brings 40 years of ministerial experience to this House.

Daniel Coughlin is a Catholic. That does not make him more nor less qualified for the job. But I am proud of his historic appointment. I hope his appointment will help us to heal and that it will bring a sense of pride to the millions of Catholic men and women around this country who have had legitimate feelings of past discrimination which some in this House have sought to manipulate.

I urge all of my colleagues to get to know Father Coughlin. He is a good man who will provide this House with spiritual guidance and counseling support necessary to bring us together again. Let me say to every leader of this House and to every Member of this House: let us embrace our new Chaplain, put this episode behind us, and move forward to do the people's business.

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RESIGNATION AS CHAPLAIN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 23, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: During the last 21 years it has been my privilege and honor to serve as Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. I came to the House with a view that the practice of politics can be a noble vocation and should be considered a high calling and I leave with that view strengthened and with my admiration enhanced for the people who serve in government.

I write now to inform you that effective Thursday, March 23, 2000, I resign my office as Chaplain of the House of Representatives.

It has been a singular opportunity to be elected to the position of Chaplain and now to be named Chaplain Emeritus, as I have sought to serve all the Members of the House and to honor their political and religious traditions. The friendships that have begun here have nourished my life and my work and I leave with appreciation for our years together and with a salute to the opportunities of the future.

With every good wish, I remain.

Sincerely,

JAMES D. FORD,
Chaplain.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and with regret, the resignation is accepted.