

**MICHAEL R. TURNER**

TENTH DISTRICT, OHIO

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**Congress of the United States**  
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April 13, 2016

Gen. Ellen M. Pawlikowski  
Commander  
Air Force Materiel Command  
AFMC/CC  
4375 Chidlaw Road  
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, 45433-5001

Dear Gen. Pawlikowski:

I am writing to express my serious concerns with the recently reported actions of personnel at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB) removing a Bible from the POW/MIA display at Wright-Patterson Medical Center.

As you may know, I have worked diligently to prevent religious symbols and expression from becoming the targets of censorship and removal. In 2007, the Architect of the Capitol (AoC) had in place a policy that prohibited religious inscriptions on the certificates that accompany flags flown over the United States Capitol. One of my constituents, Andrew Larochelle, requested that a flag be flown over the Capitol for his grandfather, an Army Infantry veteran. He requested that the certificate inscription read: "In honor of my grandfather Marcel Larochelle, for his dedication and love of God, Country, and family". However, the Architect of the Capitol refused, citing its self-imposed policy of prohibiting religious expression on flag certificates, and issued a certificate to Andrew that censored the word "God."

I immediately began working on a bipartisan basis with my colleagues in Congress to put an end to the Architect's senseless restriction. After receiving a letter co-signed by over 160 Members of Congress, the AoC reversed its policy and issued Andrew a new certificate, which I was honored to present to him personally. Additionally, I introduced legislation, the Andrew Larochelle God, Family, and Country Act, to permanently end the restriction of religious expressions on flag certificates.

It is simply unacceptable that WPAFB personnel removed the Bible from the display, and I am concerned that similar efforts to restrict religious freedom may be made at other military installations. I am greatly concerned that the actions at Wright-Patterson Medical Center may reflect a policy

implementation at WPAFB that could put at risk many of the artifacts currently on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. It is my hope that you will work with Air Force leadership to prevent the censorship of religious freedoms and freedom of expression that are central to both the United States Constitution and our American traditions.

Thank you for your timely attention to these concerns, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



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Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress