

American Humanist Association
1777 T Street NW
Washington, DC 20009

February 24, 2015

Representative XX
XXX HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative XX,

Congratulations on your victory in the 2014 elections! As the new congressional session gets underway, I feel compelled to inform you about an organization within Congress that often supports legislation that weakens the separation of church and state and discriminates against non-religious Americans.

The organization I refer to is the Congressional Prayer Caucus, an official caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives which includes over 85 members of Congress. The purposes of the Congressional Prayer Caucus are “to 1) recognize the vital role that prayer by individuals of all faiths has played in uniting us as a people and in making us a more generous, more cooperative, and more forgiving people than we might otherwise have been; 2) collect, exchange, and disseminate information about prayer as a fundamental and enduring feature of American life; 3) use the legislative process – both through sponsorship of affirmative legislation and through opposition to detrimental legislation – to assist the nation and its people in continuing to draw upon and benefit from this essential source of our strength and well-being.”

Unfortunately, members of the Congressional Prayer Caucus have repeatedly introduced and supported legislation that we feel is unconstitutional and often favors religious institutions and individuals over non-religious institutions and individuals. The CPC was a leading force behind H. Res. 888, which opposes any effort to remove sectarian objects from our nation's public buildings and educational resources, and the Caucus strongly advocated for the “In God We Trust” Resolution, which re-affirmed the phrase as our national motto.

The Congressional Prayer Caucus is also one of the leading advocates for opening each legislative day with a prayer, which relegates non-religious Americans and others who don't pray to the status of second-class citizens. Prayer is important to many Americans, and they should feel secure in their freedom to practice their beliefs. However, when public officials and Congress explicitly endorse public prayer, they alienate millions of non-religious Americans who oppose the joining of religion and government.

It is for this reason that I ask you not to join the Congressional Prayer Caucus and to actively work to ensure that the wall of separation between church and state is strengthened and maintained.

I thank you for your consideration, and I wish you a successful and productive term as a representative of the American people.

Sincerely,

Roy Speckhardt
Executive Director
American Humanist Association