

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2018

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Chairman Goodlatte,

Thank you both for your leadership of your respective Committees, and for your continued efforts to provide economic relief to hardworking families and commitment to our shared American values.

Recently, an atheist-led group sued the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to eliminate a 64-year-old tax provision, the Parsonage allowance. As you may know, the Parsonage allowance is a tax-exempt housing allowance under section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code for which clergy, and other religious leaders are eligible.

In 2017, a federal judge in Wisconsin ruled the Parsonage allowance unconstitutional, holding that the allowance violates the Establishment Clause. The Federal Court's decision has been appealed by the Trump Administration, with oral arguments expected later this year.

The Parsonage allowance allows religious leaders to live near their congregation and serve the community around them. This allowance follows the same tax principle that permits our military, overseas workers, and other employees across various industries to receive compensation for their housing costs.

The Parsonage housing allowance is essential to treating our nation's pastors, ministers, and religious leaders fairly-avoiding government entanglement in religious matters, and leaving religious leaders free to serve sacrificially in the communities that are most in need. Our nation's religious leaders have important responsibilities that are vital to our country's overall well-being and it is our responsibility to ensure that the government does not needlessly interfere with their ability to do their job.

For example, Bishop Peecher from Chicago receives the Parsonage allowance and has devoted his life to decreasing gang violence, mentoring at-risk youth, and providing food and clothing to the homeless community. Religious leaders such as Bishop Peecher would be forced to move

farther away from their communities and curtail their ministries with the elimination of the tax-exempt housing allowance.

Removing the Parsonage allowance would have a lasting impact not only on churches, but also on surrounding at-risk communities.

As we monitor the Gaylor v. Mnuchin case, we encourage you to continue to take any necessary legislative actions to continue treating our nation's selfless leaders fairly, and continue to support the Parsonage allowance, to protect the religious freedoms upon which our nation was founded.

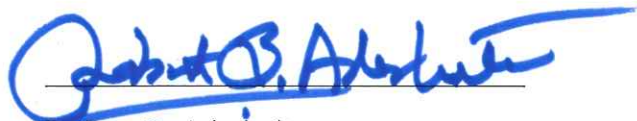
Sincerely,



Robert Pittenger
Member of Congress



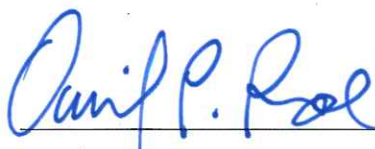
Luke Messer
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



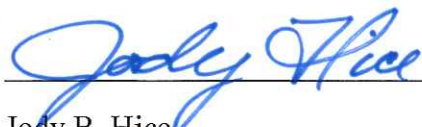
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress




David P. Roe, M.D.
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Jody B. Hice
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Steven Pearce
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney
Member of Congress



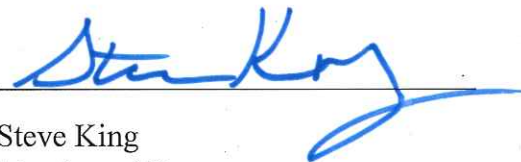
Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress



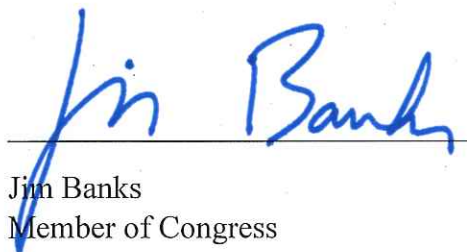
Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



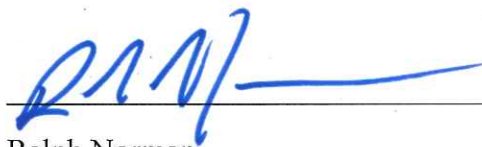
Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



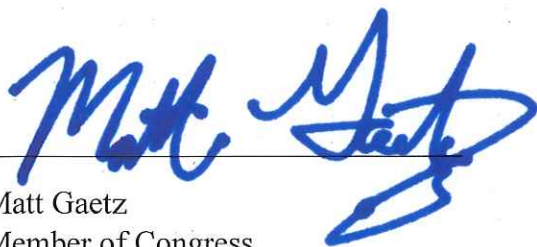
Steve King
Member of Congress



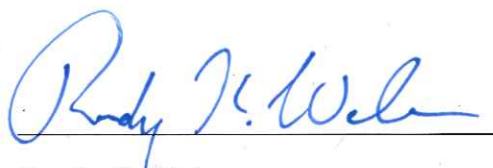
Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman
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Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Randy K. Weber
Member of Congress