



NEWS RELEASE

Congressman Walter B. Jones

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JONES BLASTS UNC-CHAPEL HILL FOR BANNING CHRISTIAN STUDENT GROUP

Jones calls on the Department of Education to investigate the university's decision to derecognize a Christian fraternity, Alpha Iota Omega.

Washington, D.C.- Third District Representative Walter B. Jones asked the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Acting Assistant Secretary Ken Marcus to examine the University of North Carolina's decision to derecognize a Christian fraternity, Alpha Iota Omega.

In a letter to Marcus, Jones explained his concerns about the ongoing problem of censorship of Christian students at the Chapel Hill campus. Jones cited a pending compliance review by the D.C. Enforcement Office regarding an incident that occurred in February at Chapel Hill where a professor sent an e-mail to a class berating a student for his class comments on Christian teachings of homosexuality, an action Jones believes constitutes harassment.

Jones is now asking Acting Assistant Secretary Marcus to look into another possible violation of free speech and freedom of religion rights at UNC-Chapel Hill in light of the university's most recent decision to derecognize Alpha Iota Omega. University regulations say the fraternity must accept all students into the group regardless of religious affiliation, yet the group believes their Christian membership requirement is necessary because it is critical to maintaining the Christian identity of the organization.

"A Christian fraternity, Alpha Iota Omega is the most recent victim of abusive policies at UNC. The school's administration has decided that a Christian organization seeking to have Christian members is 'discriminatory,'" Jones said in the letter. "Alpha Iota Omega, and possibly other organizations, have had their access to campus facilities, services, programs and financial support revoked. These actions constitute an outright violation of student rights to free speech, free exercise of religion, and freedom of association."

For additional information or to schedule an interview with Congressman Walter B. Jones please contact Kristen Quigley at (202) 225-3415.