

Religious liberty under attack

- Special to the Leader & Times

Washington, D.C. – Tuesday, Congressman Tim Huelskamp released details of activities by the Obama Administration to deny Catholics access to Mass this past weekend.



Father Ray Leonard, who serves at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Georgia, was denied access to the King Bays Chapel to celebrate Mass this past weekend. As a priest contracted by the Department of Defense to meet the spiritual needs of hundreds of Catholics on and around the Base, Fr. Leonard was met by locked chapel doors and posted signs: “Shutdown: No Catholic service till further notice.”

Even after volunteering his time to celebrate Mass and hear confessions, Father Leonard was still denied access to his parishioners.

“This is our church, Catholics have an expectation and obligation to attend Mass and we were told, ‘no you can’t go to church this week,’” commented Father Leonard. After serving ten years

as a teacher in China, he understands firsthand about government attacks on religious liberty: “My parishioners were upset. They were angry and dismayed. They couldn’t believe that in America, they’d be denied access to Mass by the government.”

Huelskamp, a promoter of religious liberties in Congress, spoke with Leonard at length Tuesday morning.

Huelskamp reported: “Time and time again this Administration demonstrates it is waging a war against the very religious freedoms upon which America was founded. This is exactly why we worked to pass legislation (House Concurrent Resolution 58) this past weekend – to protect the religious liberties of all those who bravely serve in our Armed Forces.”

Huelskamp introduced the Military Religious Freedom Protection Act in 2012 and remains committed to fighting injustices like this from happening again. The Act contains protection for Chaplains to ensure they’re not required to participate or perform any services that conflict with their religious views. Portions of this Act were included in the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, guaranteeing protection of speech and conscience for those serving in our military. He remains committed in fighting to protect and defend religious liberty in our Armed Forces.