

DEPUTY WHIP
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1602

February 14, 2024

Chairman Mike Thompson
Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
Capitol, 300 S.W. 10th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66612

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee:

I write to you in support of Senate Bill No. 431—an act directing the capitol preservation committee to approve plans for a memorial honoring Emil Joseph Kapaun.

Father Kapaun's life can be described in three words: Faith, Courage, and Freedom.

Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Father Kapaun began leading worship and saying mass for servicemembers at the Herington Army Airfield. He knew the importance of ensuring our military had the opportunity to practice their faith and hear the Word of the Lord during difficult and uncertain times.

Father Kapaun was determined to bring together his unwavering Catholic faith and desire for military service. He eventually joined the United States Armed Forces as an Army Chaplain—serving in World War II and the Korean War.

Father Kapaun was awarded both the Bronze Star and Medal of Honor for going above and beyond the call of duty in service to our nation. These heroic efforts include running into intense enemy machinegun and small arms fire to save a wounded soldier's life, and then just a few months later, defying orders to rescue 15 soldiers despite the certainty of his capture. In 1993, Father Kapaun was named a "Servant of God" by Pope John Paul II, the first step toward canonization in the Catholic Church.

Father Kapaun dedicated his life to serving God and his Country. More than 70 years after his death, his heroic legacy of service continues to inspire Kansans across our state. I urge the Federal and State Affairs Committee to support SB 431. Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jake LaTurner
Member of Congress