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October 30, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan,

I drafted this letter last week. After the events of this weekend, I knew that ADL could be silent no more.

We write to call to your attention an extraordinarily disturbing series of involvements and statements by Representative Steve King that are anti-Semitic and offensive not just to the Jewish community, but to all Americans. We urge you, as Speaker of the House of Representatives, to strip Rep. King from his chairmanships, and to take formal disciplinary action to censure Rep. King and condemn his actions.

We do not take this action lightly. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, ADL does not support or oppose candidates for political office. We also recognize that there are any number of issues that ADL and a Member of Congress could disagree on. When it comes to Rep. King, we are not writing about substantive disagreements. After years of offensive statements, over the past weeks, Rep. King has met with outright anti-Semitic organizations and individuals, giving them the imprimatur of legitimacy that comes with meeting with a Member of Congress.

Moreover, the massacre of 11 of our fellow Jews at prayer at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh has reminded us that silence in the face of anti-Semitism and hate is acquiescence. It is to enable it. What the moment demands is our country's leaders, from all sectors of society, to make it crystal clear that anti-Semitism and hate have no place in the United States. As the Speaker of the House, one of the most powerful elected officials in our nation, we believe you have an obligation to act and an opportunity to make a difference.

The details of what Rep. King did came to light in recent press reports. On August 24, Rep. King met in Austria with members of the Freedom Party, a far-right political party founded by a former Nazi SS officer, and sat for an interview with *Unzensuriert*, a Freedom Party-aligned publication. Despite claims by Rep. King and Freedom Party (FPO) leaders, the Freedom Party remains riddled with anti-Semitism and Holocaust trivialization. As such, the Jewish community of Austria boycotts the party in its entirety. Since FPO joined the government coalition in December 2017, the Jewish community of Austria has noted 19 anti-Semitic or neo-Nazi incidents with party officials. Among those incidents were:

- An FPO leader in the city of Imst posting a Nazi-era poster of Hitler with the caption, “Adolf, Germany needs you.”
- An FPO official in Tullner used the Nazi term “*untermensch*” (“subhuman”) to refer to refugees. Several FPO candidates and Members of Parliament are associated with a fraternity, whose songbook includes the lines, “Step on the gas, you old Germans, we’ll manage the seventh million.”
- The Freedom Party leader Heinz-Christian Strache, just six years ago, posted a caricature on Facebook with a corpulent figure labeled “Bankers” with Stars of David on his cufflinks, dollar signs on his tie and a hooked nose.
- Strache trivialized the Holocaust by saying members of the Freedom Party were “the new Jews,” when anti-fascist protesters demonstrated outside a far-right event.

During the interview, Rep. King raised the specter of Jewish philanthropist George Soros “[whose] money floats in in such a way you can't see the flow” as being behind civil unrest and what Rep. King sees as the “Great Replacement,” a belief among white nationalists that white Europeans are being replaced by minorities.

It is particularly outrageous that Rep. King met with the FPO while on a trip sponsored by “From the Depths,” an international non-profit group dedicated to Holocaust education. intended as an educational trip around the Holocaust. When questioned about his trip to Poland, Rep. King denigrated the Jewish history of the Holocaust, saying he sought out the “Polish perspective” on the Holocaust and pointed to his takeaway of the “Polish perspective” that they “don’t know” whether Nazi or Soviet occupation of their country was worse.

While recently revealed, these kinds of meetings and statements from Rep. King are not new. In June, Rep. King re-tweeted a prominent anti-Semite associated with neo-Nazis. Earlier this month, Rep. King endorsed Faith Goldy, a Toronto mayoral candidate who has suggested that Canada is undergoing “white genocide;” who has proudly recited the anti-Semitic and white supremacist “14 words” slogans; and who has appeared on a show hosted by the neo-Nazi

website, the *Daily Stormer* in which she praised another neo-Nazi for his “well thought-out ideas” about the “JQ” (the “Jewish question.”) . When confronted about these facts, Rep. King has refused to delete his retweets, which are perceived as endorsements.

Rep. King has brought dishonor onto the House of Representatives. We strongly urge you and the congressional leadership to demonstrate your revulsion with Rep. King’s actions by stripping him of his subcommittee chairmanship and initiating proceedings to formally censure or otherwise discipline him. By doing so, you will make clear that his actions were deeply offensive, wrong, and that the U.S. House of Representatives will not tolerate anti-Semitism or bigotry in any form.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Greenblatt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" being more prominent than the last name "Greenblatt".

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director