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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - He Is Risen

APRIL 01ST 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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During holy week, beyond decorating and hiding eggs and spending time with our family, we celebrate Jesus' life, death and most importantly His resurrection. As I reflect on the importance of Easter, I think about how new beginnings have benefited us all. While the Friday of the crucifixion brought grief and loss to Jesus' loved ones, Sunday brought joy when they found that the tomb was empty and Jesus had risen. His death felt like an end, but truly, it was the beginning of eternal life.

Growing up as the son of a preacher, we learned the details and importance of Easter early on. From betrayal to faith, Easter serves as a reminder that we have a God who has defeated the grave and in that, we have the strength to stand by our faith and live a life that glorifies Him.

In recent years, we have seen Washington bureaucrats often test our faith by denying Christians of their rights as government mandates found themselves at odds with the closely held religious beliefs of millions of Americans. Under Obamacare, employers were forced to provide health insurance that covers services and medications that violate their religious beliefs. The same law attempted to require certain religious groups who had historically opted out of health insurance to, for the first time ever,

purchase government coverage or risk a fine. Government's failure to understand that millions of American's answer to someone higher than a federal bureaucrat has even played out right here in Missouri's Eighth Congressional District. The National Park Service wanted to require a permit and a 48-hour notice before baptisms could occur within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. While we were successful in reversing that decision, we must always be mindful of a government capable of infringing upon the beliefs you and I hold dear.

I was fortunate enough to travel to the Holy Land a few years ago. I was without words walking down the same streets I grew up reading about in the Bible, seeing the birthplace of Jesus Christ and witnessing baptisms in the Jordan River. My visit to Israel deepened my faith and strengthened my resolve to stand up for Christian values each and every day. Furthermore, it solidified in my heart our continued need to protect our greatest ally in the world, Israel - a place which holds relics for the Christian and Jewish faiths alike. Beyond serving as an example for democracy, rule of law and equal treatment of all people in one of the most volatile regions in the world, the direct roots, origins, and holy sites of many faiths are honored and celebrated around Israel. It is high time we show our allies like Israel that we stand with and support them and it is why I applauded President Trump's announcement late last year to follow through on a 22 year old commitment to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Even in the face of adversity, we must stand up for what's right. As a Christian and as a Member of Congress, I've had the honor of standing up for our faith and taking action to protect religious rights. Whether that's voting to defund taxpayer abortions, stopping Obamacare from violating American's religious beliefs or standing up to the National Park Service's attempts to require permits for baptisms on public water, I am proud to use my vote and my voice in Congress to protect the rights of the faithful worldwide.

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