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January 11, 2017

The Honorable Stephen T. Ayers
Architect of the Capitol
SB-15, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Ayers:

I am writing to request an official review of the artwork titled "Untitled #1," which is currently displayed in the U.S. Capitol as the winner of the 2016 Congressional Art Competition for Missouri's 1st Congressional District.

While it is not my desire to censor individuals' freedom of speech and expression, we are a nation of laws and rules and our rights are only as secure as the institutions built to enforce those laws. The U.S. House of Representatives has established rules to govern the Congressional Art Competition and we have a responsibility to ensure those rules are followed. The artwork "Untitled #1" is in clear violation of the Suitability Guidelines outlined in the official rules for the competition.

The 2016 Rules and Regulations for the Congressional Art Competition distinctly prohibit sensationalistic artwork and artwork that depicts contemporary political controversies. The guidelines state:

Artwork must adhere to the policy of the House Office Building Commission. In accordance with this policy, exhibits depicting subjects of contemporary political controversy or a sensationalistic or gruesome nature are not allowed. It is necessary that all artwork be reviewed by the panel chaired by the Architect of the Capitol and any portion not in consonance with the Commission's policy will be omitted from the exhibit.

The artwork "Untitled #1" does not meet these criteria. The May 6, 2016 press release from Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay announcing the winner describes the artwork as the portrayal of "a colorful landscape of symbolic characters representing social injustice, the tragic events in Ferguson, Missouri and the lingering elements of inequality in modern American society." Rep. Clay's statement acknowledges that the painting portrays a matter of contemporary political controversy. Further, Rep. Clay has publically stated that the artist "just doesn't have respect for police who use the cover of a blue uniform to

do animalistic things to people.” The artwork’s depiction of law enforcement as animals shooting citizens is both sensationalistic and gruesome in nature.

I respectfully request that you review “Untitled #1” and using the rules and regulations of the competition make a determination on its qualifications to hang in the Capitol.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Reichert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "D" at the beginning.

DAVE REICHERT
Member of Congress