



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

January 17, 2017

Sam A. Cabral  
International Union of Police Associations AFL-CIO  
1549 Ringling Boulevard, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sarasota, Florida 34236-6722

Dear Mr. Cabral,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Congressional Art Competition entry from Missouri's First Congressional District. Like you, I am disgusted by the dishonorable depiction of law enforcement officers and agree that the painting has no place in the U.S. Capitol.


While some may strive to falsely label this painting's removal from the Capitol as a First Amendment issue, I can assure you that this boils down to one, simple truth: it breaks the rules.

The guidelines for the Congressional Art Competition clearly state that "exhibits depicting subjects of contemporary political controversy or a sensationalistic or gruesome nature are not allowed." I don't think that anyone would disagree that this young artist, while talented, chose a subject of political controversy. That is why the Architect of the Capitol has removed the painting from display.

Artistic expression is an important part of the American experience, but the Congressional Art Competition—and more importantly, the U.S. Capitol—is not an appropriate venue for defaming our law enforcement. The student artwork we display should celebrate our nation's talented youth, not insult the brave men and women who protect us.

Thank you again for sharing your concerns regarding this oversight by the Congressional Art Competition. I hope that the painting's removal brings you relief and that you, like me, are looking forward to the next crop of Congressional Art Competition winners that celebrate our great nation.

Sincerely,

  
Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker