



April 30, 2016

An Open Letter to the Administration of Wheaton College:

This week, Wheaton College alumnus and former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert was sentenced to 15 months in prison for fraud - fraud he committed to cover up a history of sexually molesting teenage boys. Refusing to be silenced any more, three of his victims and the sister of a deceased victim spoke out in the court proceedings.

In an effort to lighten his sentencing, Hastert's colleagues Bill Pollard, Floyd Kvamme, and PJ Hill - current members of the Wheaton College Center for Faith, Politics and Economics (previously named the J. Dennis Hastert Center for Economics, Government, and Public Policy) wrote the judge letters of support. These letters praise Hastert's service and integrity without ever acknowledging his pattern of abusing teenage boys and his decades long efforts to keep it hidden.

OneWheaton profoundly and unequivocally condemns Dennis Hastert's serial abusive behavior. We commend the strength and courage it took for Hastert's victims to speak out against Hastert, the longest standing Speaker of the House. We are appalled that representative members of the Wheaton College community would write in support of Hastert rather than standing in solidarity with his victims.

Further, we are stunned that Wheaton College has not issued a stronger statement of condemnation and grief over damage done by someone whose image has been so strongly connected to Wheaton College. On May 31st, 2015, Wheaton College publicly stated: "We commit ourselves to pray for all involved, including Speaker Hastert, his family, and those who may have been harmed by any inappropriate behavior."¹ Hastert's pattern of sexually abusing teenage boys was far beyond inappropriate and was supported by the evidence at the time of this statement. In his sentencing this week, Hastert himself acknowledged his behavior.

In the wake of the Dennis Hastert's admission of guilt and subsequent sentencing, with the details of his abuse now public, we call upon Wheaton College to issue an unequivocal statement strongly condemning Hastert's abusive and deceptive behavior and expressing solidarity and support for Hastert's victims.

When powerful Christian institutions, like Wheaton College, fail to denounce the abusive behavior of their community leaders and instead praise, protect or excuse the abuser, they are complicit in that abuse and the profound suffering and irreparable damage incurred. When the

abuser is a Christian or represents key Christian institutions, this damage is not only psychological but spiritual.

Since its inception, OneWheaton has made a commitment to be a voice of freedom and hope for Wheaton College students and alumni who were taught that, as Christians, their gender or sexual identity was subject to the requirements of rigid dogma, archaic gender roles, and an antiquated understanding of human sexuality. This heteronormative sexual ethic and culture have consistently set the stage to protect the sexual desires and behavior of men in power and to silence the most vulnerable, the abused.

It is our hope that Wheaton College, a powerful role model to the Evangelical Christian world, will have the moral courage to be a voice for the victims so often silenced by the authority of their abusers.

Sincerely,

OneWheaton

OneWheaton is a community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and allied alumni and students of Wheaton College which affirms LGBTQ individuals and the relationships that are a natural expression of their identity.

www.onewheaton.com

¹ <http://www.wheaton.edu/Media-Center/Media-Relations/Statements/Hastert-Statement>