

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 548

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the national motto for the government of a religious people.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 11, 2000

Mr. SCHAFFER (for himself, Mr. HEFLEY, and Mr. TANCREDO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the national motto for the government of a religious people.

Whereas the national motto of the United States of America is “In God we Trust”;

Whereas the national motto was adopted in 1956, and is codified at 36 U.S.C.A. § 302;

Whereas the motto is a reference to the Nation’s religious heritage (see, *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668, 676–77 (1984));

Whereas the national motto recognizes the religious beliefs and practices of the American people as an aspect of our national history and culture (see, *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668, at 716 (1984) (Brennan, J., dissenting) (citing

Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. at 435 (Brennan, J., concurring));

Whereas nearly every criminal law on the books can be traced to some religious principle or inspiration (see, Abington v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203, at 303–04 (Brennan, J., concurring));

Whereas the motto “In God we Trust” is deeply interwoven into the fabric of our civil polity (see, Abington v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203, at 303–04 (Brennan, J., concurring));

Whereas the motto recognizes the historical fact that our Nation was believed to have been founded “under God” (Id.);

Whereas the content of the motto is as old as the Republic itself, and has always been as integral a part of the First Amendment as the very words of that charter of religious liberty (Id.);

Whereas the display and teaching of the motto to public school children has a valid secular purpose, such secular purpose being to foster patriotism (see, Gaylor v. United States, 74 f.3d 214, at 216 (10th Cir. 1996), cert. denied, 517 U.S. 1211 (1996)) symbolize the historical role of religion in our society (Id. at 676), express confidence in the future (Id. at 692–93) (O’Conner, J., concurring)), inculcate hope, and instruct in humility;

Whereas there is a long tradition of government acknowledgment of religion in mottoes, oaths, and anthems (see, ACLU of Ohio v. Capital Square Review and Advisory Board, 20 F.Supp.2d 1176, at 1180–85 (S.D. Ohio. 1998));

Whereas the national motto serves the secular purpose of expressing confidence in the future and encouraging the recognition of what is worthy of appreciation in society (see, *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668, at 693 (1984) (O’Conner, J., concurring));

Whereas the motto reflects the national sentiment that we are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being (see, *Zorach v. Clauson*, 343 U.S. 306, at 313–14 (1952));

Whereas of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports (Farewell Address of President Washington, Sept. 19, 1776);

Whereas whatever may be conceded to the influence of the refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle (Farewell Address of President Washington, Sept. 19, 1776);

Whereas it is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand (John Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States*, Charles Francis Adams, editor (Boston, Little Brown & Co. 1854), vol. IX, p. 229, October 11, 1789);

Whereas with caution we must indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion (Farewell Address of President Washington, Sept. 19, 1776);

Whereas the role of religion in public life is an important one which deserves the public’s attention (see, *ACLU of Ohio v. Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board*, 20 F.Supp.2d 1176, at 1180–85 (S.D. Ohio, 1998));

Whereas the signers of the Declaration of Independence appealed to the Supreme Judge of the World for the recititude of their intentions, and avowed a firm reliance of the protection of divine Providence (Declaration of Independence, see also, *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577, at 633 (1992) (Scalia J., dissenting));

Whereas George Washington, in his first inaugural address as President, said that “[I]t would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes” (*Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577, at 633 (1992) (Scalia, J., dissenting), quoting, President George Washington, Inaugural Address, April 30, 1789);

Whereas the first Congress urged the President to declare a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many single favors of Almighty God (see, *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 675 n.2);

Whereas the first Congress reenacted the Northwest Ordinance, which states that Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary, to good government and happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged (Northwest Territory Ordinance, art. III Stat. 51n, 52 (1787));

Whereas the Declaration of Independence demonstrates this Nation was founded on transcendent values which flow from a belief in a Supreme Being;

Whereas the Founding Fathers believed devotedly that there was a God and that the unalienable rights of man were rooted in Him, is clearly evidenced in their writings, from the Mayflower Compact to the Constitution itself (see, *Abington v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, at 213 (1963));

Whereas religion has been closely identified with the history and government of the United States (see, *Abington v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, at 212);

Whereas our national life reflects a religious people who earnestly pray that the Supreme Lawgiver guide them in every measure which may be worthy of His blessing (see, *Abington v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, at 213) (quoting James Madison, MEMORIAL AND REMONSTRANCE AGAINST RELIGIOUS ASSESSMENTS, quoting *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1, at 71–72 (1947) (Rutledge, J., dissenting));

Whereas the words “In God We Trust” are over the entrance to the Senate Chamber (see, *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421, at 440); and

Whereas our national motto, “In God We Trust”, 36 U.S.C. sec. 186, which is prominently engraved in the wall above the Speaker’s dias in the Chamber of the House of Representatives and is reproduced on every coin minted and every dollar printed by the Federal Government (see, *County of Allegheny v. ACLU*, 492 U.S. 573, at 673):
Now therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the United States Congress encour-
2 ages the display of the National Motto of the United

1 States of America in public buildings throughout our Na-
2 tion.

