

August 3, 2006

VICTORY FOR PLEDGE PROTECTION

HOUSE VOTES TO PROTECT "UNDER GOD" IN PLEDGE

We are one step closer to permanently defeating the atheists and secularists who want to remove "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag. On Wednesday, July 19, 2006 Congressman Todd Akin's Pledge Protection Act finally made it to the floor of the House for a vote. The House Leadership moved the bill directly to the floor after several problems in the Judiciary Committee which I have reported to you in the last Chairman's Report. As the lead organization in promoting the Pledge Protection Act, the Religious Freedom Coalition had placed tremendous pressure on the House Leadership and individual congressmen to pass the Pledge Protection Act. Literally tens of thousands of signed petitions were delivered door to door at congressional offices throughout the year.

The actual vote in the House was called at the exact same time that many of the key supporters of the Pledge Protection Act were at the White House in a meeting with President George W. Bush concerning the stem cell issue. Both myself and our Executive Director, Peggy Birchfield, were in the East Room of the White House when Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) urgently called leadership to inform them that many of the key congressmen who supported the legislation to protect the Pledge could not walk out of a meeting with the President to return to the Capitol Building to vote.

As a result Majority Leader John Boehner had to order the Pledge Protection Act onto a suspension calendar to allow Congressmen Smith, Roscoe Bartlett, Joseph Pitts, Phil Gingrey, and others sufficient time to return to the Capitol.

The final vote on the Pledge Protection Act was finally held at 4:41PM after several amendments offered by liberal Democrats to alter the bill failed. We won by a large margin of 260 to 167. In the end 39 Democrats voted with 221 Republicans to pass the Pledge Protection Act. We had 14 more votes for the Pledge Protection Act than the last vote two years ago. There was a victory celebration in Congressman Akin's office and renewed vigor among the organizations supporting the Pledge Protection Act as it headed to the Senate where Senator Kyl is the chief sponsor of the legislation.

On this past Tuesday, July 25th, key conservative leaders including myself and our Executive Director, Peggy Birchfield, had lunch with Congressman Todd Akin. At the lunch we discussed, among other things, how to move forward with the Pledge Protection Act in the Senate. Congressman Akin made it clear to us that his commitment to the Pledge Protection Act has not ended because of the big win in the House and that he would personally call Senators asking them to support the bill in the Senate.

For Congressman Akin this effort is about a lot more than passing legislation with his name on it. He is committed to protecting the heritage of the nation and stopping out of control courts from stripping that heritage away.

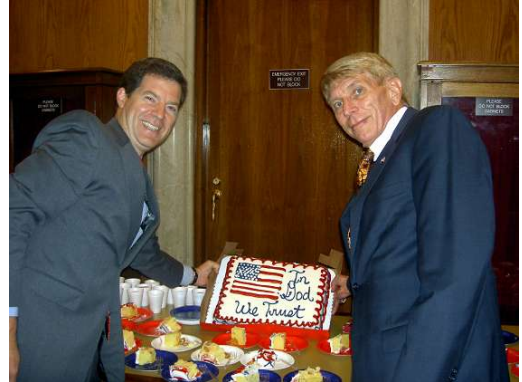
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ANOTHER VICTORY!

BIG WIN FOR "IN GOD WE TRUST"

The "In God We Trust" 50th Anniversary resolution (S.Con.Res.96) was passed by the Senate unanimously on Wednesday, July 12th. The resolution, authored by Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) commemorates, celebrates, and reaffirms our national motto. "In God We Trust" was formally adopted as the U.S. national motto on July 30, 1956, but the idea it embodies has been integral to our nation since its birth.

Although the motto was used for nearly two centuries on coins and currency it was not until 1956 that the motto was made official. At a time when atheist Michael Newdow has filed lawsuits to remove our national motto from our currency the Senate has stepped forward to reaffirm the national motto, "In God We Trust." This is a great victory and proclaims an important message, particularly in light of court challenges to religious symbols and phrases in our national life.



Senator Brownback and William Murray hold up "In God We Trust" cake to celebrate victory for our national motto.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF RELIGION ACT

BROWNBACK ENTERS FIGHT

Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) has introduced a Senate version of the Public Expression of Religion Act in the Senate and has put it on a fast track because of his membership on the Judiciary Committee. This is the companion bill to the one authored by Congressman John Hostettler and introduced in the House in the last several sessions. I have written about Congressman Hostettler's efforts to rein in the ACLU and other radical groups with this legislation before. This is the first time that we have had an ally in the Senate fully engaged in this effort.

To emphasize what the bill will do if passed into law, Senator Brownback has titled his version the Veterans' Memorials, Boy Scouts, Public Seals and Other Public Expressions of Religion Act of 2006 (S-3696). Senator Brownback has already managed to schedule hearings in the Subcommittee on the Constitution for Wednesday, August 2. The hearing is titled, "Paying Your Own Way: Creating a Fair Standard for Attorney's fees awarded in Establishment Clause Cases."

Like the House bill, Senator Brownback's version would amend the Civil Rights Attorney Fees Act of 1976 which now allows the ACLU and other anti-Christian groups to get paid by school districts and local governments for filing "Establishment Clause" lawsuits such as those brought against the memorial cross on a hill in San Diego. If passed and signed into law the ACLU would have to pay their own legal fees regardless of the outcome of the case.

Under current law the ACLU gets most of what it demands to secularize the United States without ever filing a lawsuit. They simply threaten school boards, towns and other local governments with expensive lawsuits. Facing massive legal costs plus the possibility of paying the ACLU lawyers as well, many towns have taken down memorials that have been in place for decades, even centuries. The Public Expression of Religion Act will force the ACLU to anti-up its own cash rather than win by threat alone.

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William J. Murray, Chairman

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