

Religious Freedom Coalition

***** NEWS RELEASE *****

Washington, DC -- September 14, 2005

The Religious Freedom Coalition views the deplorable ruling today by U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is unconstitutional, as further evidence of the need for judicial restraint and the need for passage of the Religious Freedom Amendment introduced by Congressman Ernest Istook.

The authors of the First Amendment wisely acted to prevent the federal government from following the example of European governments and establishing a state church. For that reason the Amendment reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion...." For over a hundred and fifty years this was the settled law of the land, and Americans controlled their local public schools as they saw fit, never imagining that anyone could so twist the meaning and intent of the Constitution as to equate the federal government with a local school.

However, activist federal judges have done just that, and effectively reached into every school in the land to censor any mention of the Creator. In this most recent case, it was not alleged by the plaintiffs that their children were forced to recite the pledge; a 1943 Supreme Court case had already held that compulsory pledge requirement is unconstitutional (and this was before the words "under God" were added to the pledge. The issue here is that Judge Karlton believes, "the mere fact that a pupil is required to listen every day to the statement 'one nation under God' has a coercive effect."

So long as we have federal and Supreme Court judges who disregard the Constitution and replace it with their own personal opinions and prejudices, we will progressively lose more and more of our religious liberties. We can never be sure from day to day, what new and bizarre twist will be given to the law by some unelected judge who is appointed for life and who is accountable to no one.

Congress should act to restrain the out of control 9th Circuit by passing the Pledge Protection Act authored by Congressman Todd Akin, and should then ensure a more comprehensive protection of our religious rights by passing the Religious Freedom Amendment.

Statement by:

**William J. Murray, Chairman
Religious Freedom Coalition**

Media Contact:

**Peggy Birchfield, Executive Director
Religious Freedom Coalition
Phone: (202) 543-0300**

National Headquarters: 906 Lafayette Blvd., Fredericksburg, VA 22401
(540) 370-4200 Fax (540) 370-4535 Internet: www.rfcnet.org