

Intercessors Push Back Darkness: Supreme Court Ruling Is Answer to Prayer

Monday's U.S. Supreme Court ruling wasn't just an answer on prayer—it was an answer to prayer! In what experts are calling one of the biggest religious liberty wins in the last half-century, the court gave its blessing on an American tradition more than 200 years old: legislative prayer. In cities across America, secular activists have come to legal blows with dozens of local governments over the freedom to open meetings with a prayer, recognizing the Author of our liberty.

And while they may have scared the prayers out of some city councils, the town of Greece, New York, refused to be one of them. After a lengthy tug-of-war, the case finally landed at the steps of the Supreme Court, where the justices ruled 5-4 to continue a practice as old as the nation itself. For as long as anyone can remember, Greece had allowed any citizen of any religion (or lack thereof) to kick off the meetings with prayer. And while the policy was wholly inclusive, Christian prayers were the most popular. Despite the town's efforts to recruit other faith groups, only four of the 127 invocations were offered by non-Christians.

A local resident, Susan Galloway, decided the tradition was offensive and petitioned the board to stop praying altogether. The town refused, telling Galloway that if she objected, she was free to wait in the hallway until the invocation was over. Instead, Galloway waited in the office of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, which agreed to sue the city all the way to the Supreme Court. In the lower court, judges actually sided with Galloway, ruling that "such a 'steady drumbeat' of Christian invocations violates the Constitution's prohibition against government endorsement of

religion.”

But that “steady drumbeat” was no fault of the town’s, which encouraged a Jewish man, a Wiccan priestess and even a local Baha’i chairman to join in the tradition. Apparently, some courts seem to think that Christians should be punished because other faiths don’t take advantage of the opportunities afforded them. Even President Obama saw the ridiculousness in that and stunned both sides of the debate by filing his own brief—in defense of prayer. Family Research Council had submitted its own amicus brief in the case on behalf of 49 members of Congress, essentially making the point that if the 2nd Circuit Court was correct, then Congress would have been violating the Constitution for more than two centuries.

With the chisel of political correctness slowly chipping away at the First Amendment, this is a monumental victory for every American standing for the inclusion of faith—not just by means of legislative prayers, but for all religious speech and expression. With this ruling, the justices dealt a huge blow to the forces of political correctness, who continue to demand that we check our faith at the entrance to the public square.

Fortunately, this court recognizes just how misguided their intolerance is. As Justice Anthony Kennedy explained, the tradition of public prayer exists to unite, not divide: “The decision concluded that legislative prayer, while religious in nature, has long been understood as compatible with the Establishment Clause. As practiced by Congress since the framing of the Constitution, legislative prayer lends gravity to public business, reminds lawmakers to transcend petty differences in pursuit of a higher purpose, and expresses a common aspiration to a just and peaceful society.”

One look at the headlines and we can all agree: If there’s one thing this country could use more of, it’s prayer!

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