

‘In God We Trust’ Reaffirmed as National Motto

The phrase “In God We Trust” has caused controversy over the years as the national motto. But on Tuesday, the U.S. Representatives passed, 396-9, a concurrent resolution reaffirming its status.

The resolution, sponsored by Rep. J. Randy Forbes (R-Va.), supports and encourages the motto’s display in all public schools and government buildings. It is a concurrent resolution because in 2006 the Senate passed a similar resolution for the 50th anniversary of “In God We Trust” as the national motto.

Forbes, co-chairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, said in a statement Monday: “Tomorrow, the House of Representatives will have the same opportunity to reaffirm our national motto and directly confront a disturbing trend of inaccuracies and omissions, misunderstandings of church and state, rogue court challenges, and efforts to remove God from the public domain by unelected bureaucrats.

“As our nation faces challenging times, it is appropriate for Members of Congress and our nation—like our predecessors—to firmly declare our trust in God, believing that it will sustain us for generations to come,” he added.

The resolution was needed, Forbes said, because President Obama “falsely proclaimed” *E pluribus unum*, a Latin phrase meaning “out of many, one,” as our national motto. Although Obama did not call the phrase, found on U.S. currency, our national motto, Forbes points out that the president failed to respond to congressional entreaties to issue a correction.

Rep. Jarod Naller, D-N.Y., led opposition to the bill, calling

it a meaningless distraction from the nation's real problems. "Nobody is threatening the national motto," he said.

Forbes argued that, "in times of national challenge or tragedy, the people of the United States have turned to God as their source for sustenance, protection, wisdom, strength and direction."

He also pointed to the Capitol Visitor Center, which opened in 2008 to educate Capital visitors on the "legislative process as well as the history and development of the architecture and art of the U.S. Capitol."

According to the congressman, Capital Visitor Center historians "sanitized the public building of any references to our national motto" by replacing an "In God We Trust" inscription with stars in a replica of the House Chamber and cropping the phrase out of a photo of the chamber. Forbes argued that the "omissions and inaccuracies" were only corrected when members of Congress intervened.

Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas) also supported the resolution, quoting Psalm 127:1 and arguing that America plays a special role in the world.

"I believe, as many other Americans do, that America is a special place, a chosen place, and even an exceptional place, and America is more than just another country on the globe, as some say," Poe said.

"Throughout our history, we've served as a beacon of light in an often dark world, and one reason is because, 'in God we trust.' As it has been said, 'unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen watch in vain.' I agree with that and we should affirm it, and that's just the way it is."

The national motto has been jeopardized before. In 1994, the Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a lawsuit challenging the phrase as the nation's motto and its use on currency. The

lawsuit was dismissed on grounds that "In God We Trust" is not a religious phrase. The atheist organization appealed the dismissal to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1996, but the court did not take its case.

The phrase officially became the national motto in 1956. It started appearing on paper currency the following year, but "In God We Trust" first appeared on U.S. coins in 1864 during the Civil War.