



Message of the Week

June 26-July 2, 2002

Presented by Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN)

“The phrase ‘Under God’ should remain in the Pledge of Allegiance, as recited by public school teachers and students all across America.”

- The 2-1 ruling in *Newdow v. U.S. Congress et al.* in the 9th Circuit, saying that leading the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is unconstitutional because of the phrase “under God,” was WRONG.
- But we shouldn’t be surprised at this ruling, given how far the jurisprudence in this area has strayed in the past 30 years from our nation’s founding principles.
- This ridiculous ruling is perfectly consistent with the current judicial culture—supported by liberal Democrats nationwide—that bans prayer at graduation ceremonies, forbids Christmas trees from being displayed in the public square, and strips the Ten Commandments from the walls of courthouses.
- The First Amendment to the Constitution prohibits Congress from making a law **establishing** a religion or **preventing the free exercise** of religion.
- Reciting the Pledge in its entirety is neither an establishment of religion nor a prohibition on anyone’s free exercise of their religion.
- The American Founders never intended for religion to be stripped from public life. Just the opposite: they wanted a government based on biblical principles and respectful of the religious underpinnings to the reasons Europeans fled to America in the first place.
- The “under God” phrase is not a prayer to God; it merely recognizes the historical importance of religion in our Founding and in our present-day culture.
- We can expect this type of jurisprudence to continue as long as the Senate continues to impose a litmus test against President Bush’s judicial nominees who believe that the First Amendment **protects**—not forbids—religious expression.