

# IN GOD WE TRUST

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In January 2011, Congressman J. Randy Forbes introduced [H.Con.Res.13](#), to reaffirm 'In God We Trust' as our national motto and encourage its display in public building and government institutions. The bill has 64 bipartisan cosponsors and was reported favorably out of the House Judiciary Committee in March of 2011. 'In God We Trust' has been our [nation's motto](#) for over [five](#) decades. It is part of our national anthem and alluded to in our Pledge of Allegiance. It is written on our coins and our currency and is engraved in both the House and the Senate chambers, as well as in numerous public building across our nation.

## *Why* Reaffirm 'In God We Trust'?

**President Obama inaccurately proclaims "E Pluribus Unum" our national motto.** Last November before a worldwide audience, in a much-anticipated and much-publicized speech focusing on the United States' relationship with the Muslim world, President Obama [falsely proclaimed](#) that our national motto was *E pluribus unum*. In reaction, 42 bipartisan Members of Congress wrote a [letter](#) calling on the President to correct his inaccurate statement, noting that the official national motto is *In God We Trust*. Not only did the President fail to issue a correction, he has failed to even respond to the letter. The uncorrected transcript of the Jakarta speech in which President Obama states, "In the United States, our motto is *E pluribus unum* -- out of many, one" remains on the [White House website](#). *E pluribus unum* has never been the motto of the United States.

**Misunderstanding of the phrase "Separation of Church and State".** The First Amendment to the Constitution reads, "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*" The words 'separation of church and state' **do not** appear in the U.S. Constitution. Rather, the phrase originates from a [letter](#) penned by Thomas Jefferson on January 1, 1802, to the Danbury Baptist Association. In fact, just two days after sending this letter, on January 3, 1802, President Thomas Jefferson [attended a church service in the U.S. Capitol](#). The Supreme Court [has held](#), "The First Amendment, however, does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of Church and State. . . We find no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion."

**Rogue Court Challenges.** Even despite the constitutionality of "In God We Trust" being [established by the courts](#), just since 1996 there have been 7 direct court challenges to the motto. These cases are not isolated to one area of the country; instead, one-third of our federal circuit courts across the United States have heard appeals challenging "In God We Trust". Some groups bringing these challenges directly seek "freedom **from** religion," a goal which grossly distorts the constitutionally-granted "freedom **of** religion." These cases have sought to challenge the motto itself, as well as its inscription on our currency and display on public buildings. In every case, the courts have upheld the constitutionality of the national motto. Other court challenges have been brought in recent years aimed at [prayer in school](#), the long-standing displays of [crosses at veteran's memorials](#), the words '[under God](#)' in the Pledge of Allegiance, [the National Day of Prayer](#), and the words '[so help me God](#),' frequently used to conclude the presidential oath of office.

**Inaccuracies and Omissions in the Half-Billion-Dollar Capitol Visitor Center.** In 2008, the over half-billion dollar Capitol Visitor Center opened for the [purpose](#) of educating over 15,000 Capitol visitors daily on the "legislative process as well as the history and development of the architecture and art of the U.S. Capitol." When finally opened, however, Capitol Visitor Center historians had sanitized the public building of



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any references to our national motto, including replacing the inscription of 'In God We Trust,' inscribed above the Speaker's Rostrum with stars in a replica of the House Chamber and cropping an actual picture of the chamber so you could not see the words 'In God We Trust.' Additionally, a plaque was placed in the Visitors Center falsely "educating" visitors the national motto was "*E Pluribus Unum.*" Only after Members of Congress intervened [publically](#) and [legislatively](#) were these omissions and inaccuracies corrected.

**Efforts to Remove God from Public Domain.** In recent years unelected government bureaucrats have become increasingly apt to remove, obscure, or bar references to God or our national motto, even when their actions reverse decades of long-standing traditions. In most cases, congressional intervention and pressure was required to reverse the decision.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs [attempted to ban flag folding recitations](#) at military funerals that referenced God or religion, even if specifically requested by the family of the deceased.
- The U.S. Mint [attempted to remove the inscription](#) "In God We Trust" from the front of the new Presidential dollar and instead print it on the edge of the coin.
- The National Park Service [attempted to turn a capstone replica](#) of the Washington Monument, bearing the inscription "*Laus Deo*" or "Praise be to God" so the public could not read it.
- The Navy and Air Force attempted to enact policies that would have affected the ability of [military chaplains](#) to pray according to their religious conscience.
- The Architect of the Capitol [refused a teen's request](#) for a certificate noting his grandfather's "love of God, country and family" to accompany a souvenir flag that had flown over the building - a decision that would have prohibited even the Pledge of Allegiance from being printed on the flag certificates.

## It is our History.

**At our nation's founding.** Authors penned the [Declaration of Independence](#) writing, "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

**In nation's infancy.** Francis Scott Key wrote the [poem](#) that would become our national anthem the *Star Spangled Banner* containing the stanza, "And this be our motto – 'In God is our trust.'"

**In the midst of the Civil War.** President Lincoln addressing a war torn, weary, and divided nation, saying at the [Gettysburg address](#), "this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

**During the economic expansion of America's industrialization.** Congresses passed the [Coinage Act](#) stating that the Secretary of the Treasury "may cause the motto 'In God We Trust' to be inscribed on such coins as shall admit of such motto."

**World War I.** In his [speech before Congress](#) asking for a declaration of war, President Wilson said "...the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

**After nearly a decade of Great Depression.** President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a [Thanksgiving proclamation](#) saying, "Thus from our earliest recorded history, Americans have thanked God for their blessings. In our deepest natures, in our very souls, we, like all mankind since the earliest origin of mankind, turn to God in time of trouble and in time of happiness. 'In God We Trust.'"



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**At D-Day facing Nazi advances on Europe.** In his [famous radio address](#), President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Americans to join him in praying, "Help us, Almighty God, to rededicate ourselves in renewed faith in Thee in this hour of great sacrifice... As we rise to each new day, and again when each day is spent, let words of prayer be on our lips, invoking Thy help to our efforts."

**During the Baby Boom.** "In God We Trust" was [inscribed](#) above the south entrance door in the Senate chamber during the 1949-1951 reconstruction.

**Cold War and Economic Prosperity.** In a [speech](#) given during the Cold War, President John F. Kennedy said, "Today our Nation is passing through another time of trial... We will need to draw upon the best that this Nation has--often--and draw upon it physically and intellectually and materially. But we need also to call upon our great reservoir of spiritual resources... The guiding principle and prayer of this Nation has been, is now, and ever shall be 'In God We Trust.'"

**Civil Rights Movement.** Two years after *Brown vs. Board of Education* and one year after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus, 'In God We Trust' was [adopted](#) as the official national motto of the United States.

**Vietnam War.** In the midst of the Vietnam War, President Lyndon Johnson [said](#), "Not long ago I received a letter one morning from a mother whose son had been killed in Vietnam. . . . She concluded, '...As long as we believe, our strength is in our faith in God and He will never fail us.' So, my countrymen, in those words from that dear mother are to be found the greatness of this Nation and also the strength of its President."

**Reagan Years.** In 1984, in an [address to the nation](#), responding to an effort to remove prayer from our public schools, President Reagan said, "The first amendment of the Constitution was not written to protect the people from religion; that amendment was written to protect religion from government tyranny. . . . The act that established our public school system called for public education to see that our children learned about religion and morality. References to God can be found in the Mayflower Compact of 1620, the Declaration of Independence, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem. Our legal tender states, 'In God We Trust.' . . . But now we're told our children have no right to pray in school. Nonsense. The pendulum has swung too far toward intolerance against genuine religious freedom. It's time to redress the balance."

**1990's.** Following the Oklahoma City bombings, President Bill Clinton delivered a speech [saying](#), "I ask all Americans tonight to pray – to pray for the people who have lost their lives, to pray for the families and the friends of the dead and the wounded, to pray for the people of Oklahoma City. May God's grace be with them."

**Present day.** In 2002, in response to a case challenging the words 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance, Congress passed and President Bush signed a law [reaffirming](#) the Pledge of Allegiance and 'In God We Trust' as our national motto. Additionally, in 2006, the Senate [reaffirmed](#) 'In God We Trust' on the 50th anniversary of its adoption as the official national motto of the United States. On the night of the September 11 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush delivered a [speech](#) to the nation saying, "Tonight, I ask for your prayers for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened. And I pray they will be comforted by a power greater than any of us, spoken through the ages in Psalm 23: 'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me.'"



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