



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 5, 2012

## Another California City Declares, “In God We Trust”

The city council of Anaheim, California is taking the U.S. House of Representatives up on its admonition that America’s national motto, “In God We Trust,” ought to be proudly displayed in public schools and government buildings across America. On May 29, the southern California community’s governing body voted unanimously to include the motto, set in four-inch brushed-gold letters on a black background, in the City Council Chambers.



Gail Eastman, the Anaheim councilwoman who pushed for the addition, told the [Orange County Register](#) that including the motto was “a matter of patriotism. It is on our currency ... It’s part of what America means to us.”

While many American may assume that “In God We Trust” has been the nation’s official slogan from the beginnings of the Republic, in reality it only became the national motto in 1956 in a flurry of Cold-War induced patriotic fervor. In November 2011, as reported by [The New American](#), the House of Representatives, by a 369-9 vote, reaffirmed the phrase, which has graced U.S. coins off-and-on since the 1860s, as the nation’s official motto. Representative J. Randy Forbes (R-Va.), the sponsor of the resolution, noted that the House action mirrored a resolution by the U.S. Senate, which in 2006 used the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the motto to reaffirm its importance to America’s national fabric.

“As our nation faces challenging times,” Forbes said in a [press release](#), “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.”

The *Orange County Register* noted that Anaheim is the 17th community in Orange County to grace its government chambers with the motto. The paper reported that “at least 92 California cities have included the motto, and 281 counties and cities nationwide, according to Anaheim staffers who researched the issue.”

According to a [posting on the Congressional Prayer Caucus](#), since 1996 “there have been seven 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.’ ... In every case, the courts have upheld the constitutionality of the national motto.”

While thus far the ACLU and other atheist attack groups have restrained themselves from filing lawsuits against the most recent communities to display the motto, some non-believers have nonetheless expressed their displeasure over the trend toward acknowledging God. According to the *Orange County Register*, one self-identified Anaheim atheist spoke against his community’s display, “saying it would make him feel excluded from city government. He suggested that the city include the former U.S. motto, ‘e pluribus unum,’ Latin for ‘out of one many, one.’ ”

Famously, in a 2010 speech in Indonesia President Obama “informed the foreign audience that



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America's national motto was 'E Pluribus Unum,' " reported *The New American*, "an error he failed to correct, even when asked to by members of Congress. According to Forbes' office, the uncorrected transcript of the President's speech 'remains on the [White House website](#).' "

One of the leaders in lobbying for governmental entities to display the national motto is a Bakersfield, California, group called [In God We Trust-America](#). In 2002 the group's president Jacquie Sullivan, a member of the Bakersfield city council, led a successful effort for Bakersfield to display the national motto in its council chambers at the city hall. Since launching her patriotic organization in 2004, Sullivan has helped many other communities do the same.

"This is part of free speech, our First Amendment," Sullivan told Focus on the Family's [CitizenLink](#). "... we do have the right to display what Congress originally adopted as our national motto, 'In God We Trust,' back in 1956." As for lawsuits, she said that "we have not had one legal challenge [thus far in California] because there's nothing to challenge. We are proudly and prominently displaying our national motto, and we have the right to do that."

Nonetheless, as more city governments hop on board to display the motto, we can fully expect the ACLU to find an atheist or two willing to be sufficiently aggrieved and disenfranchised by the phrase to file a suit demanding the motto be removed.

*Photo: Anaheim City Hall*



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