



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 12, 2023

Coach “Average Joe” Kennedy’s Gridiron Prayer War Continues

Bremerton (Washington) High School’s [retaliation is the real reason](#) assistant football coach Joe Kennedy decided to resign after one game. The law firm that has represented him over the past eight years in *Kennedy v. Bremerton High School* is looking into allegations of that retaliation.

Translation: The war over the faux “wall of separation” between church and state — this time between the gridiron and the school — is far from over.

In the resignation letter he posted on [his website](#), Coach Kennedy wrote:



AP Images
Joe Kennedy

I believe I can best continue to advocate for constitutional freedom and religious liberty by working from outside the school system so that is what I will do.

I will continue to work to help people understand and embrace the historic ruling at the heart of our case. As a result of our case, we all have more freedom, not less. That should be celebrated and not disrespected.

However, in his official resignation letter to the head coach of the Bremerton Knights football team, he wrote:

Taking the field again and offering a prayer is all I wanted. I take pride in persisting until that goal was accomplished.

However, it is apparent that the reinstatement ordered by the Supreme Court will not be fully followed [by Bremerton] after a series of actions meant to diminish my role and single me out in what I can only believe is retaliation by the school district.

Therefore, I am tendering my immediate resignation.

The Supreme Court stated that “Bremerton School District cannot retaliate against or take any adverse employment action against Kennedy,” but that is precisely what the district has done:

- It has haggled over the details of when he would be allowed to return;



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- It delayed providing essential paperwork during his reapplication process;
- Kennedy was never assigned a coach's locker;
- He was never issued the team's official apparel;
- His name was not listed on the athletic department's website;
- Before the first game of the season he wasn't provided a players' roster;
- He wasn't given a "play card" or any assignment for the game;
- He was not invited to the traditional coaches' pregame meal with the opposing team;
- He was not invited to his team's traditional meal the day after the game;
- His key fob to the door of the office didn't work, causing him to miss a mandatory Monday morning coaches meeting;
- He wasn't allowed to pose with the team in its after-game photo;
- He was instructed not to speak with any member of the team in the days leading up to the first game; and
- He was banned from the head coach's pep talk prior to the game.

In its press release last Wednesday, Hiram Sasser, the executive general counsel at First Liberty Institute, said, "We have come to learn of serious allegations of retaliation against Coach Kennedy by the Bremerton School District":

They've done everything they can to make him feel unwelcome [and we are] going to investigate the situation to determine whether further legal action is necessary.

If such additional legal action is undertaken, it will be another opportunity to expose the canard of the "wall of separation" that anti-Christian *agents provocateurs* have used for decades to obliterate that faith from the public square.

Kennedy was fired for one reason and one reason only: Bremerton was following the anti-faith agenda that declared that the Founders had somehow intended on building a "wall" to remove religion and its practice from the culture. In [Kennedy v. Bremerton School District](#), Supreme Court Justice Neal Gorsuch repeatedly excoriated that canard:

Kennedy's private religious exercise did not come close to *crossing any line* one might imagine separating protected private expression from impermissible government coercion....

Here, a government entity sought to punish an individual for engaging in a personal religious observance, *based on a mistaken view* that it has a duty to suppress religious observances even as it allows comparable secular speech....

A government entity's concerns about *phantom constitutional violations* do not justify actual violations of an individual's First Amendment rights....

The Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses of the First Amendment protect an individual engaging in a personal religious observance from government reprisal; *the Constitution neither mandates nor permits the government to suppress such religious expression.*
[Emphasis added throughout.]

Tim Greenwood of Tim Greenwood Ministries provided one of the clearest explanations of what the Founders really intended:



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The “wall” was understood as one-directional; its purpose was to protect the church from the state.

The world was not to corrupt the church; yet the church was free to teach the people Biblical values [without interference].

The story of Coach Kennedy’s battle against the establishment continues. In late October his biography, *Average Joe: The Coach Joe Kennedy Story*, will be available in bookstores [and at Amazon](#). And a movie about his life, also called *Average Joe*, is currently in production by GND Media Group, the producer of the popular film series *God’s Not Dead*.

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