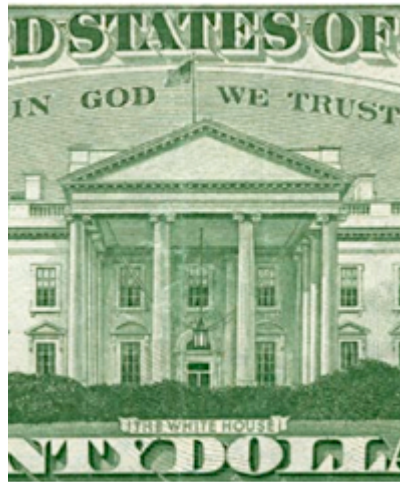




Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 3, 2011

U.S. House Affirms National Motto “In God We Trust”

The U.S House of Representatives voted 396-9 on November 1 to affirm “In God We Trust” as the official national motto of the United States. Reported the New York Times: “The resolution ... is designed to clear up any confusion over the motto’s official status and to encourage schools and other public institutions to display it, said Representative J. Randy Forbes, Republican of Virginia and the measure’s sponsor.” Forbes explained that “what’s happened over the last several years is that we have had a number of confusing situations in which some who don’t like the motto have tried to convince people not to put it up.”



In a [press release](#) Forbes noted that like 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, the House had a responsibility to do the same. “As our nation faces challenging times,” Forbes said, “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.”

Forbes, who also serves as co-chair of the [Congressional Prayer Caucus](#), said that in the [55 years since](#) Congress made “In God We Trust” the official national motto, “a growing, disturbing pattern of inaccuracy and omissions regarding the motto has arisen in the public square, from speeches made by the President of the United States in foreign nations, to the sanitization of ‘In God We Trust’ from the half-billion dollar Capitol Visitor Center by American historians.” He said that in re-affirming the motto Congress had “provided clarity amidst a cloud of confusion about our nation’s spiritual heritage and offered inspiration to an American people that face challenges of historic proportion.”

As to the inaccuracy in a presidential speech, Forbes was referring to an address President Obama made last November in Indonesia, which focused on the nation’s relationship with the Muslim world. In that speech Mr. Obama informed the foreign audience that America’s national motto was *E Pluribus Unum*—“Out of Many, One,” 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](#).”

In addition, noted Forbes’ office, 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.” Yet, Capitol Visitor Center historians had sanitized the public building of 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.” It was not until Members of Congress stepped in and demanded changes that the omissions and inaccuracies were corrected.



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While Forbes' resolution enjoyed overwhelming support from fellow lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, it was not without its detractors. The *New York Times* noted that a group of Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee "wrote a dissent against the motto resolution last March, and Representative Jerrold Nadler of New York spoke against it [November 1] in a brief debate on the House floor."

Said Nadler: "Why are my Republican friends returning to an irrelevant agenda? The national motto is not in danger. No one here is suggesting we get rid of it. It appears on our money, it appears in this chamber above your head, it appears in the Capitol Visitors' Center, all over the place." Nadler complained that the resolution boiled down to "an exercise to tell people who may not believe in God, 'You don't really count, you're not really an American.'"

The *Times* also recalled that among America's past national leaders who opposed having the motto on the nation's currency was President Theodore Roosevelt, who argued that to "put such a motto on coins, or to use it in any kindred manner, not only does no good but does positive harm, and is in effect irreverence, which comes dangerously close to sacrilege."

Nonetheless, the resolution notes the importance of affirming that America was founded upon faith in God. "If religion and morality are taken out of the marketplace of ideas," the resolution reads, "the very freedom on which the United States was founded cannot be secure."

A [posting on the Congressional Prayer Caucus](#) noted that 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.' ... In every case, the courts have upheld the constitutionality of the national motto."

One of the resolution's sponsors, Rep. Dan Lungren (R.-Calif.) explained that reaffirming the motto was important because of such attacks by atheists groups trying to disassociate the nation from its religious heritage. "This is an important message that we need to affirm," he said. "It is under attack, and we are not wasting time. How could we waste time making sure 'In God We Trust' is enshrined in our national motto?"

Another sponsor, Rep. Jeff Miller (R.-Fla), said the resolution served as an important reminder to America's people and its leaders. "As President Reagan said," recalled Miller, "'If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.'"



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