

111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. 1279

Calling for an appeal of the ruling which found the National Day of Prayer to be unconstitutional and expressing the support of the House of Representatives for the institution of an annual National Day of Prayer.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 20, 2010

Mr. TIAHRT (for himself, Mr. FORBES, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. POSEY, Mr. HERGER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. BARTLETT, Mr. HARPER, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. PENCE, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. WAMP, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. HUNTER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. LATTA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## RESOLUTION

Calling for an appeal of the ruling which found the National Day of Prayer to be unconstitutional and expressing the support of the House of Representatives for the institution of an annual National Day of Prayer.

Whereas the first action of America's first Congress in 1774 was to ask a minister to open with prayer and to lead Congress in the reading of 4 chapters of the Bible;

Whereas the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution was intended by our Founding Fathers to prohibit one religious denomination from enjoying the exclusive backing of government and to

prohibit the Federal establishment of any type of religious uniformity or orthodoxy that rewards observers and punishes violators;

Whereas the First Amendment guarantees the right of elected and appointed officials to express their religious beliefs through public prayer;

Whereas public prayer and national days of prayer are a long-standing American tradition to bolster national resolve and summon the national will for victory;

Whereas the Continental Congress asked the colonies to pray for wisdom in forming a Nation in 1775;

Whereas Benjamin Franklin proposed that the Constitutional Convention begin each day with a prayer;

Whereas General George Washington, as he prepared his troops for battle with the British in May 1776, ordered them to pray for the campaign ahead, that it would please the Almighty to “prosper the arms of the united colonies” and “establish the peace and freedom of America upon a solid and lasting foundation”;

Whereas President John Adams declared May 9, 1798, as a National Day of Prayer, “that our country may be protected from all the dangers which threaten it”;

Whereas President James Madison, who wrote the First Amendment to the Constitution, issued four proclamations calling the Nation to a day of prayer;

Whereas President Abraham Lincoln, on March 30, 1863, issued a proclamation, “recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God,” and designated April 30, 1863, as a National Day of Prayer;

Whereas President Harry S. Truman, on April 17, 1952, by signing Public Law 82–324, established an annual National Day of Prayer;

Whereas, in 1988, President Ronald Reagan designated the first Thursday in May as the annual National Day of Prayer;

Whereas, since 1988, each President has issued a non-sectarian proclamation of the National Day of Prayer;

Whereas, in 1998, President Bill Clinton called on “people of every religious denomination gather to worship according to their faith. In churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques, Americans come together to pray”;

Whereas, in 2002, President George W. Bush issued a proclamation calling on, “our citizens to reaffirm the role of prayer in our society and to honor the religious diversity our freedom permits by recognizing annually a ‘National Day of Prayer’ ”;

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States affirmed the integral in an unanimous ruling declaring “This is a religious people. . . . From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation”;

Whereas the Supreme Court has a lengthy history of affirming the practice of public prayer conducted and encouraged by the Federal Government;

Whereas, in 2008, a lawsuit was brought against the Federal Government questioning the constitutionality of the annual National Day of Prayer; and

Whereas, on April 15, 2010, U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb ruled that the annual National Day of Prayer was

a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution:  
Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) encourages Attorney General Eric Holder to  
3       appeal the ruling by United States District Judge  
4       Barbara Crabb, which found the National Day of  
5       Prayer to be unconstitutional; and

6               (2) reaffirms the commitment of the United  
7       States House of Representatives to the institution of  
8       an annual National Day of Prayer.

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