

declares the House in recess until approximately 4:45 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 4:45 p.m.

□ 1648

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS) at 4 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

REAFFIRMING "IN GOD WE TRUST" AS THE OFFICIAL MOTTO OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 13) reaffirming "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States and supporting and encouraging the public display of the national motto in all public buildings, public schools, and other government institutions.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 13

Whereas "In God We Trust" is the official motto of the United States;

Whereas the sentiment, "In God We Trust", has been an integral part of United States society since its founding;

Whereas in times of national challenge or tragedy, the people of the United States have turned to God as their source for sustenance, protection, wisdom, strength, and direction;

Whereas the Declaration of Independence recognizes God, our Creator, as the source of our rights, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.:"

Whereas the national anthem of the United States says "praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation . . . and this be our motto: in God is our trust.:"

Whereas the words "In God We Trust" appear over the entrance to the Senate Chamber and above the Speaker's rostrum in the House Chamber;

Whereas the oath taken by all Federal employees, except the President, states "I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.:"

Whereas John Adams said, "Statesmen may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand.:"

Whereas if religion and morality are taken out of the marketplace of ideas, the very freedom on which the United States was founded cannot be secured;

Whereas as President Eisenhower said and President Ford later repeated, "Without God, there could be no American form of government, nor, an American way of life.:"; and

Whereas President John F. Kennedy said, "The guiding principle and prayer of this Nation has been, is now, and ever shall be 'In God We Trust.':" Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress reaffirms "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States and supports and encourages the public display of the national motto in all public buildings, public schools, and other government institutions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolution 13 currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

□ 1650

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

When our Declaration of Independence was penned, it was unique in that the writers of that document recognized that the rights that we have as American citizens didn't come from some committee in this body, some resolution, or even from the king, but rather came from God himself. In 1814 during the War of 1812, Francis Scott Key noticed through the battle fires that were going on a unique thing and began to pen what would become our national anthem when he wrote "The Star Spangled Banner" and mentioned that "In God We Trust" was the motto of this great Nation.

The 39th Congress of the United States in 1865 during the Civil War which threatened to tear this Nation apart authorized "In God We Trust" to be placed on certain coins, including the dollar, the half dollar, and the quarter dollar.

The 43rd Congress in 1873 authorized "In God We Trust" to be placed on coins as the Secretary of Commerce would so desire, and the Secretary of the Treasury.

In the 60th Congress in 1908, Congress mandated that "In God We Trust" be placed on all gold and silver coins.

In the 82nd Congress in 1951, the Senate Chamber demanded and authorized and then had "In God We Trust" placed over the entrance door in the Senate Chamber.

In the 84th Congress in 1955, Congress enacted and President Eisenhower ap-

proved legislation requiring the motto to appear on all coins and currency.

In the 84th Congress in 1956, Congress officially adopted "In God We Trust" as the national motto of the United States. And in that Congress, the Senate said it was important for the spiritual and psychological value of the country to have a clear and well-defined national motto.

In the 87th Congress, this body authorized "In God We Trust" to be placed right behind where you're standing, where it still stands today.

In the 107th Congress, we reaffirmed the Pledge of Allegiance and once again our national motto.

And in the 109th Congress, the Senate reaffirmed the national motto.

In the 110th Congress in 2007, Congress said that on the dollar coin, we had to put "In God We Trust" from the edge of coin back to where it belonged on the front or back of the coin.

And in the 111th Congress in 2009, this body authorized "In God We Trust" to be in the Capitol Visitor Center and mandated it be placed in there.

Mr. Speaker, so what brings us to today? Well, unfortunately, there are a number of public officials who forget what the national motto is, whether intentionally or unintentionally. There are those who have become confused as to whether or not it can still be placed on our buildings, whether it can be placed in our school classrooms. Almost a year ago, the President, in making a speech across the world, said that our national motto was "E Pluribus Unum." When the Visitor Center was opened, was tried to be opened, \$621 million of taxpayer money, a part of this very structure that you and I are standing in here now, they did not have the national motto in there. In fact, they inscribed in the stones that our national motto was "E Pluribus Unum."

We have because of those kinds of omissions many people confused today, asking when we changed it, what happened to it, can they still display it in rooms. So we believe that today it's fitting that we come together as a Congress and reaffirm that great national motto, do what the Senate did just a few years ago, and once again make clear to the people in this country that our national motto is "In God We Trust" and encourage them to proudly display that motto.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I hope and urge the adoption of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Although the American people are concerned about restoring our economy and creating jobs, today we are returning to irrelevant issues that do nothing to promote economic growth and put Americans back to work. We have seen this before.

In the 107th Congress, we passed a bill to reaffirm the phrase "One Nation, under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, and reaffirm the national

motto. We went so far as to reenact into law, word for word, the existing law making “In God We Trust” the national motto, just to be sure.

Now, no one has threatened it. No one has said it was not the national motto. This resolution today, which has no force of law, simply restates the national motto—once again.

Why have my Republican friends returned to an irrelevant agenda? Irrelevant because it does nothing. It simply restates existing law that no one has questioned. Why are we debating non-binding resolutions about the national motto?

The American people are demanding action on the President’s jobs legislation. They are demanding that we pay attention to rebuilding our national infrastructure. They are demanding that we deal with a budget fairly and effectively. They are demanding fairness for the middle class and for the 99 percent of Americans who don’t write million-dollar checks and hire expensive lobbyists and make huge campaign contributions.

And yet here we are, back to irrelevant issue debates, the kind of thing people do when they have run out of ideas, when they have run out of excuses, when they have nothing to offer a middle class that is hurting and that has run out of patience.

What happened to Republican pledges that we weren’t going to do these kind of symbolic resolutions anymore? Symbolic because, after all, it changes nothing. The national motto remains the national motto, as much today and tomorrow as yesterday. What happened to Republican pledges that we were going to focus on the business of legislating? That was earlier this year.

Make no mistake about it: Some have taken a decidedly divisive tone when discussing the national motto. Some have sought to imply that their political adversaries, including the President, are somehow less godly, or less patriotic, and have used the national motto as a political wedge to drive home that point, or to try to drive home that point.

I think that kind of divisiveness undermines national unity which, especially in times like these, is very important. Rather than trying to one-up each other over who can be the better or more godly American, we should be working together to solve our very real problems.

Mr. Speaker, let’s get back to the work we were sent here to do. Let’s stop playing the kind of social issue games that do nothing to move the Nation forward. The national motto is not in danger. No one here is suggesting that we get rid of it. It appears on our money. It appears in this Chamber above your head. It appears in the Capitol Visitor Center, all over the place. We don’t need to go looking for imagined problems to fix. We’ve got enough real ones to worry about.

This resolution is a waste of time, a waste of effort. And again, remember

that this country is a country for all people—whether they are religious or not, whether they believe in God or not, whether they believe in one God or not. The First Amendment tells us we should make no law respecting establishment of religion nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof. This is not an establishment of religion, but simply restating this when no one has threatened it, when no one has questioned it. It is an exercise to tell people who may not believe in God: You don’t really count; you’re not really Americans.

The establishment clause is there to protect religion from government, and government from religion, to separate the two.

This resolution is here to say we don’t want to separate the two. If someone was threatening the national motto then maybe it would be necessary. As it is, this is simply an exercise in saying we’re more religious than the other people. We’re more godly than the other people. And by the way, let’s waste time and divert people’s attention from the real issues that we’re not dealing with, like unemployment. We shouldn’t go looking for imagined problems to fix when we have enough real ones to worry about.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I would like to respond to my good friend as he said this is irrelevant, nothing to offer the middle class that is hurting, when he says this is just a symbolic gesture.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who believe that the Declaration of Independence is just a symbolic document, just words. There are those who believe that that flag behind you is just a symbol, and the Pledge of Allegiance we make to it just words. And there are those who believe that “In God We Trust” right up there—just words.

They don’t realize what so many other Congresses, so many Presidents of this United States have realized: They are far more than words; they are the very fabric that has built and sustained the greatest nation the world has ever known. And I challenge my good friend who would dare say that that declaration was just a symbol, that Pledge of Allegiance just a symbol, or “In God We Trust” just a symbol, to dare say to President Lincoln, when he brought in “In God We Trust” and he talked about that and he embraced it during the greatest conflict this country has ever known, the Civil War, he was just wasting his time, it was irrelevant, he wasn’t doing anything to that Nation that was hurting.

Or to say it to Woodrow Wilson, who would embrace it during World War I when this Nation was at a very, very difficult time, that it was just irrelevant, it was just words and it did nothing at all.

Or to say to President Roosevelt, during World War II, when we didn’t know whether we’d have the freedoms that “In God We Trust” gives us the opportunity to have and that flag gives

us the opportunity to have, that “In God We Trust” was just words.

□ 1700

Or John Kennedy, or Dwight Eisenhower, or Ronald Reagan, or Francis Scott Key during the middle of a battle that challenged the existence of this Nation—just words.

Mr. Speaker, I would just say to my good friend that I understand how there are few who believe that “In God We Trust” is just words. But I would say today that it is far more than words. It is worth defending just as that Pledge of Allegiance is worth defending and that Declaration of Independence is worth defending. And I’m grateful that we will have an opportunity to do just that today.

The challenges the gentleman says don’t exist with court suits and public officials who are saying that not “In God We Trust” is our national motto but something else, it’s worth our standing today and taking 40 minutes to do what so many Presidents and so many Congresses have done before in saying that we should inspire this Nation with hope and optimism that we are different from the rest of the world and those words will continue to stand behind where you stand.

I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Nobody said that the national motto “In God We Trust” is just words. Nobody said any such thing. What I said is that this resolution is just words because no one is threatening the national motto. It’s there. It’s on our currency, and it’s on our walls. It’s there. It’s our national motto. No one denies that fact. Nothing will change when we pass this resolution. It was our national motto yesterday, it’s our national motto today, and it will be our national motto tomorrow.

This resolution is simply words designed to distract attention from our real problems to a nonexistent problem. There’s no challenge to our national motto. There is no challenge to the foundations of this country. There is a challenge to our economy, and that we ought to be paying attention to.

So all the nice words that my friend from Virginia talked about how important our belief in God is, I agree, obviously. But this resolution is a waste of time and a diversion.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee whose leadership helped bring this resolution to the floor, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) both for yielding me time and for introducing this resolution.

There are few things Congress could do that would be more important than passing this resolution. It reaffirms “In God We Trust” as the official motto of

the United States. It provides Congress with the opportunity to renew its support of a principle that was venerated by the Founders of our country and by its Presidents on a bipartisan basis.

In our Declaration of Independence, the Founders declared: "We the Representatives of the United States of America appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World do with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

George Washington, as President of the Constitutional Convention, declared, "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; this event is in the hand of God!" James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, declared while he was President "a day of thanksgiving and of acknowledgements to Almighty God." Madison said in his declaration that "no people ought to feel greater obligations to celebrate the goodness of the Great Disposer of Events and of the Destiny of Nations than the people of the United States."

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence wrote, "God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their own only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?"

More recently America's Presidents have reaffirmed the same principles. President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "In teaching this democratic faith to American children, we need the sustaining, buttressing aid of those great ethical religious teachings which are the heritage of our modern civilization. For not upon strength nor upon power, but upon the spirit of God shall our democracy be founded."

President Kennedy said, "The world is very different now, and yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God."

During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln counseled Americans to have "a firm reliance on God, who has never yet forsaken this favored land" and recognized that it is God's pleasure to "give us to see the right." And Ronald Reagan told the American people, "We are a Nation under God, and I believe God intended for us to be free."

Thanks to the leadership of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), now it is our turn to show that we still believe and recognize these same eternal truths. We can do that by approving a resolution that will allow today's Congress, as representatives of the American people, to reaffirm to the public and the world our Nation's national motto, "In God We Trust."

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN).

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, in contrast to the suggestion made that we don't need to have this reaffirmation of our national motto, I provide this evidence. First of all, we had a lawsuit by an individual in my district that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court about the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secondly, that same individual is now suing, attempting to get up to the Supreme Court on this very question of "In God We Trust." Third, just a couple of years ago, I had to fight very, very strongly to get the words "In God We Trust" emplaced, in fact, in the CVC, where it is now.

And for all of those that we've referred to in our history, I think we've omitted one which is very, very important, the leader of the civil rights revolution. Martin Luther King made it very clear in his letter from the Birmingham jail that, in fact, we act out of the requirements made on us by the God in whom we trust. That makes us a Nation that respects the liberties and the individual worth of every single member of our society. If he had not, in fact, looked to our historic belief in God as a basis for those principles that all Americans abide by, that is, that we are equal in the eyes of God and therefore equal in the eyes of our government, he would not have been successful.

This is an important message that we need to reaffirm. It is, in fact, under attack. We are not wasting time. For example, how could we waste time in making sure that "In God We Trust" is, in fact, enshrined in our laws and as our national motto?

Religious faith has been an ever present fact in our history which must be included in any picture of who we are as Americans. The failure to include it among other representations would give an incomplete and inadequate picture of our national ethos.

The motto "In God We Trust" first appeared on a United States coin in 1864 during the Civil War, and later became the official motto of our nation in 1956 by an act of Congress. It is codified as Federal law in the United States Code at 36 U.S.C. 302, which provides: "In God we trust" is the national motto.

We must say no to any revisionists who seek to rewrite the American narrative. It was not secularism and materialism which inspired those from other continents to travel across dangerous seas to a foreign land where they sought refuge from religious persecution. Neither can the manifest destiny in the hopes and dreams of those who populated the land that we now call America be described apart from a spirit which led them to face challenges and even death to fulfill those dreams.

No. It was something greater than themselves which guided them in such quests. This understanding of a greater purpose was reflected in the *Mayflower* Compact signed aboard the *Mayflower* in 1620. In acknowledging Divine Providence, John Winthrop and the other Pilgrim signers expressed the desire to form a democratic form of government and

a mutual regard for one another as equals in the sight of God.

There was a sense of destiny in those first Americans who were drawn here by that same vision. In a very real sense they conceived of themselves as a chosen people. They saw their covenant as connected with the blessing of a new land but even more importantly with an idea that America was a place with a transcendent purpose. This ethos of the older covenant provided them with a foundation rooted in a common commitment to the creation of a new political order.

The Founding generation of our nation possessed that same sense of purpose. John Adams, the author of the Massachusetts constitution, a key player in drafting the Declaration of Independence, and the President of the United States represented this worldview. Adams was committed to this early understanding that a Hebrew metaphysic was the cornerstone of the new American culture. Adams understood that only the nature of an intelligent, wise, and sovereign God could not only create, but also sustain the morality necessary to civilization itself.

He observed:

We have no government armed with powers capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

Adams understood that a constitution must be more than mere parchment or paper. Rather, our nation's basic law must be grounded in a moral order which embodies the timeless first principles of an older covenant.

Such sentiments followed what has become recognized as the clearest enunciation of those cardinal principles of American character. In his Farewell Address President Washington observed:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded by the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

The American Revolution was rooted in a very different worldview than its French counterpart. The conception of liberty to which the founding generation aspired was rooted in a Transcendent source. With respect to the philosophy underlying our political institutions and governance, we need look no further than the Declaration of Independence to discover what is perhaps the clearest statement of the source of those rights which would later be enshrined in our Constitution. We are informed in the Preamble that:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

The source of these unalienable rights—rights that cannot be given or taken away—should be noted. Where do our rights come from? They are not the product of mere men. They are not the product of mere agreement.

No. we are endowed with these rights by our Creator. The significance of this is that if our rights do not ultimately come from man, they cannot be taken away from us by mere men. It is the ultimacy of a transcendent source which gives rights their substance.

The role of the Declaration as the principal statement of American political philosophy must surely have a prominent place in our effort to unfold a catechism of American character. It is significant that Abraham Lincoln in one of his debates with Stephen Douglas derivatively stated that “[i]f the Declaration is not the truth, let us get the statute book, in which we find it, and tear it out!” There is a practical component to this argument in that “the United States Code includes the Declaration of Independence as one of the Organic Laws upon which all statutory law rests.”

However, there is a more compelling reason that Lincoln might have responded with such firmness. For he would later note at Gettysburg that it was “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” On that day of November 19, 1863 at Gettysburg, it had been 107 years since those immortal words contained in the Declaration had been declared to the new nation. Lincoln saw the Civil War as an epochal struggle necessary to this promise of the Declaration, “that 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.”

This our history, and our concepts of human dignity and equal justice before the law are deeply rooted the notion of eternal justice.

Perhaps no greater testimony exists to this fact than the Reverend Martin Luther King’s, Letter from a Birmingham Jail. He described his plight with the following eloquence:

. . . I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the eighth century prophets left their little villages and carried their ‘thus saith the Lord’ far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns; and just as the Apostle Paul left his little village of Tarsus and carried the gospel . . . to practically every hamlet and city of the Graeco-Roman world, I too am compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond to the Macedonian call for aid.

This great leader of the Civil Rights movement clearly understood the origin and nature of rights. He spoke of “God-given rights.” In describing the concept of rights he wrote:

One may well ask, “How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?” The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws; there are just and there are unjust laws. I would agree with Saint Augustine that “an unjust law is no law at all.

Now what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in terms of Saint Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law.

Dr. King reasons from experience that rights must be rooted in a moral law that is itself rooted in the law of God. The expression of a majority is itself an insufficient basis for rights. The argument by Stephen Douglas on behalf of the doctrine of popular sovereignty (allowing

states to determine the slave question by a popular vote) failed because of the moral premise that majority sentiment should not overcome the fundamental First Principle that it is not permissible to own another human being. The exercise of political will without moral justification is nothing more than the use of force legitimized by a vote. Douglas’ position that such a question could be left to the decision of the various states was in fact an argument on behalf of cultural relativism. Lincoln understood that this was not a sufficient basis for law and argued that “there is no right to do a wrong.” Rights which are not grounded in a transcendent being ultimately are left to the historical vagaries of taste and opinion.

This understanding concerning the centrality of religious faith in our nation’s history is also reflected in an opinion written by the late Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. Perhaps one of the most liberal Justices ever to sit on the Court, Douglas nonetheless observed that “We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a supreme being.” Of course, not every American believes in God—that is not what Justice Douglass was getting at. Rather, his focus was on our history as a people. And it is undeniable that throughout our history the religious faith of the American people—in all of its various forms—has been an integral part of who we are as a people. A plurality of faith commitments has come together in the American experience to form a canopy of overlapping consensus concerning the providential nature of our history.

This is our history. It is who we are as a people. Although we are not captives of the past, it would be nothing less than national suicide were we to fail to uphold the integrity of our collective story. Worse yet, we must never allow our history to be rewritten by those seeking to serve their own ends. For our understanding of our past serves to define who we are and to direct our aspirations for the future. To allow others to deny the foundational role of religious faith in our nation’s history is not only an assault on our history but an attempt to dramatically alter the direction of our nation in the years ahead.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would point out that the lawsuit that the gentleman from California referred to lost at the Supreme Court, and that was a number of years ago, which adds to the point that, of course, “In God We Trust,” our national motto, is not under attack or under threat, nor is “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance under attack or under threat. And this is, in fact, an unnecessary resolution.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Will the gentleman yield on those points?

Mr. NADLER. Yes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. The gentleman who brought that case to the Supreme Court has a case pending in Federal Court right now on the issue of “In God We Trust,” and there is a Federal action out of the District Court in Wisconsin right now attempting to get us to take out the words “In God We Trust” in the CVC. Those are still active lawsuits.

Mr. NADLER. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman may be correct. I’m not

familiar with that case. But cases making these challenges occur all the time. They lose 100 percent of the time, and there’s no reason to expect that that will change.

So, again, “In God We Trust” was our national motto yesterday and it’s our national motto today. Whether this resolution passes or not, it will be our national motto tomorrow, and we’re wasting our time.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER), the chairman of the Veterans Committee.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Virginia, for bringing this legislation to the floor; and I thank my friend from California for, in fact, pointing out to the gentleman from the other side of the aisle that, in fact, there are attacks on our national motto “In God We Trust.” We do know that there are attempts to take it out of the CVC.

This country for many, many years—in fact, from its inception—has relied on a faith in God. Yes, there are attacks every day. There are attacks on our chaplains within our military services that are now being told in some instances that they cannot perform religious duties in reference to their faith. We have the flag-folding ceremony that is under attack now on veterans’ cemeteries where people are now being told that they are not being allowed to do the flag-folding ceremony during the death of a person that has served time in this military.

□ 1710

But I think the unfortunate thing is that, as we stand here today, this is important. This is not a waste of time. It’s important that we stand here and we renew our national motto, “In God We Trust.” Ronald Reagan said, in fact, that if we ever forget that we are one nation under God, that we will then be one nation gone under.

And so I’m proud to stand with my good friend from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) and all the Members who have come on the floor today to again reaffirm that our national motto is—yesterday, today, and will be tomorrow—“In God We Trust.”

Mr. NADLER. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the gentleman from Virginia for introducing this resolution.

“In God We Trust” is an important part of American history, and this resolution is necessary to ensure that it remains a part of our history.

Today, some individuals argue that the Constitution says that America cannot have any mention of God in a public atmosphere. These folks argue that Americans must be censored when they talk in public about God or even

religion. I strongly disagree with that contention, the Supreme Court disagrees with that contention, and using the writings of our Founding Fathers as a guide, I believe they would also disagree with that contention.

What makes us unique, Mr. Speaker, is the way we started as a Nation. We had this concept in the Declaration of Independence that we are worth something as individuals, and that we are worth something as individuals not because government gives us rights or men give us rights, but the Declaration of Independence says that we are all endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. In God we trusted then and in God we must continue to trust now.

The truth is that our Constitution says that we are guaranteed freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. And having the word "God" in our national motto does not establish an official religion for the country; it just simply recognizes the role that faith and religion have played in our history.

I believe, as many other Americans do, that America is a special place, a chosen place, and even an exceptional place. And America is more than just another country on the globe, as some say. Throughout our history, we've served as a beacon of light in an often dark world. And one reason is because in God we trust. As it has been said: Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen watch in vain. I agree with that, and we should affirm it.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. NADLER. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER).

Mr. HARPER. "In God We Trust." For over five decades, America has celebrated this phrase as our national motto. This pronouncement is part of our national anthem, is written on our coins and our currency, and is engraved in both Chambers of Congress. But the United States' foundation in God far outdates the period that our country has recognized this steadfast expression as our national motto.

Our country's first national document, the Declaration of Independence, spoke to unalienable rights given to Americans by our Creator. Numerous sources point to our Founders' collective reliance on God for direction and wisdom as they drafted the United States Constitution.

When Congress adopted our Great Seal in 1782, included in its design were numerous allusions to biblical references. And in 1787, when the Constitution was framed at the convention in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin reminded the delegates that God governs in the affairs of men, declaring, "And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

The Founding Fathers knew that prayer and God's Holy word had protected them, blessed them and given them guidance to begin their

journey. These Judeo-Christian principles offered a firm, time-tested foundation for America's founders, and it is the inclusion of these principles into our government that makes America special.

Today, as I walk through our Nation's Capitol, I am constantly surrounded by the reminders of God's presence: scripture verses such as John 15:13 found on a statue, paintings of the baptism of Pocahontas and the pilgrims in prayer that we are indeed endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights.

America's religious consciousness cannot be ignored.

This is why we must reaffirm "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States and encourage the public to display this declaration in all public buildings.

Mr. NADLER. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. During the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin wrote a speech urging the assembly to begin their morning session with daily prayer. Franklin wrote: I have lived a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men.

He went on to say that: Without God's concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we, ourselves, shall become a reproach and a byword down to future ages.

Just as Benjamin Franklin suggested, we must continue to affirm that God has a place in blessing our government, in guiding our lawmakers, and that He has the ability to lead our Nation back to a path of righteousness and prosperity.

"In God We Trust" has great meaning in our Nation, and we must encourage its display in all public buildings and government institutions. So I urge my colleagues to pass House Concurrent Resolution 13.

Mr. NADLER. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD).

(Mr. LANKFORD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANKFORD. I hear many people say that our country has never been more at odds and our rhetoric more divisive than now. I would strongly disagree. I would remind us of a time in 1861 when our Nation stood at the precipice of the Civil War and the oratory spilled over into bloodshed. During that dark moment in our Nation's history, the Secretary of the Treasury ordered the Director of the U.S. Mint to create a new inscription for the national coins. He wrote: "No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins."

The Director of the Mint responded back with a variation of the phrase that he pulled out from the Star Spangled Banner, the statement, so our motto is "In God is our trust," since it was a familiar hymn and indicative of the American people. It was later finalized as, "In God We Trust" and was first put on a 2-cent coin in 1864, near the end of the Civil War.

This was not some isolated moment in American history; this is a consistent theme. Whether it be the shelling of Baltimore in 1814, when Francis Scott Key watched, knowing this was the decisive moment, or whether it was World War I or World War II that entered the Cold War, immediately after that as we were fighting against communism, trying to find what is it that sets the United States apart from the other nations around the world, it is this unique thing: Our founding documents are based around this statement, We are given our rights from God, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We as Americans believe our rights are from God. It is in God we trust.

Mr. NADLER. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS).

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. I thank the gentleman for bringing this forward.

I know that down through the ages there has been this great question that has occurred to mankind, and it is a similar one: Is God God or is man God? In God do we trust or in man do we trust? I would submit to you that the answer to that question, Mr. Chairman, is one of profound significance.

Indeed, Christopher Columbus trusted in God, and his service to God was to go out and search the world to find ways to do things that would honor God, and he ran into this place called America. Indeed, those who were colonists that first came to America came here because they wanted to worship God; they wanted to find a way to honor God. Indeed, the Founding Fathers that started this country did so in the name of God. So their trust in God has had a profound impact on those of us that live in this day.

And I would submit to you that if we answer the question the other way, if man is God, then an atheist state is as brutal as the thesis that it rests upon and there is no longer any reason for us to gather here in this place. We should just let anarchy prevail because, after all, we are just worm food. So indeed we have the time to reaffirm that God is God and in God do we trust.

Mr. NADLER. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT).

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution reaffirming "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States of America.

The motto is more than just a slogan. It defines the sentiments, I believe, of the Founding Fathers. While they never intended there to be an official state religion, they fully endorsed the idea of the acknowledgement of God.

□ 1720

From the opening of each day in the House and in the Senate with prayer, to the private prayers of the individual Founders, the Founders indeed did put their trust in God. I believe they knew in their hearts that God had a special place for the United States of America and this new Nation.

And while they knew that a Christian and godly Nation could never be achieved by any legislation that Congress could pass, they knew it was the people of the Nation who would individually receive God in their hearts for this to be truly a godly Nation.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution that's before us reaffirming our motto "In God We Trust."

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I've listened to this discussion. There's no question that most people in this Chamber, maybe everybody in this Chamber, agrees with the phrase, with the motto, "In God We Trust." I certainly do.

It's no question it's the motto of this country. We've adopted it. It's no question that it's not threatened. No one's seeking to change it, except for every so often there's a court case which uniformly gets thrown out, and that's not new.

There's no necessity for this resolution except, really, the only reason for this resolution, frankly, is to declare how good we are, that we're going to reaffirm what needs no reaffirmation, and to divert attention from the issues that we really ought to be dealing with.

So let me say, again, "In God We Trust" is the motto of the United States. It was yesterday, it is today, it will be tomorrow whether we pass this resolution or not.

We do have to be sensitive to the fact that not everyone in this country believes in God, and they are just as much Americans as those of us who do believe in God.

I see no reason for passing this resolution to reaffirm what is already the case and what we've affirmed before. So it's a waste of time. And I am not saying that "In God We Trust" is a waste of time, nor that the national motto is simply words or a symbol. They mean something.

But this resolution is simply words which does nothing, is intended to do nothing other than to get up and say, we're godly, we're good people. And it's true, we are, I hope. Most of us are. But we don't have to declare it. And we don't have to make people who may not agree with it feel that they're not as American as we are.

We don't have to spend the time in this House when we're not spending it on things that are important in terms of something that we can actually change, that we can actually do something about, like creating jobs and affecting the economy. We can't change this. This is the national motto. It will remain the national motto. This resolution changes nothing.

If this resolution were saying, let's abolish the national motto, then it would change something and we'd say, well, you can debate it one way or the other. But this changes nothing. It simply diverts attention, it wastes our time, and it is unworthy for that reason.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, in closing, the gentleman from New York says that we are simply declaring how good we are, that we are wasting our time, that we have other things that are important.

I realize that there are some who don't see the difference between what we're doing in reaffirming "In God We Trust" as our national motto from naming a post office or commending some athletic team that's won the last sports contest. But I happen to believe that when Thomas Jefferson stated in the Declaration of Independence that our rights came from God, he didn't think that was irrelevant or not important.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will support this resolution.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to reaffirm "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States (H. Con. Res. 13), and I want to thank Congressman RANDY FORBES for introducing this resolution and commend him for his tireless and ongoing defense of America's Christian heritage.

I believe that reaffirming our commitment to "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States matters. It pays tribute to our present and past, and it facilitates our future. America was founded on the principle that we derive our rights from our Creator. They are not given to us by government or by kings. These rights are given to us by God.

I don't believe that one can adequately explain the near boundless prosperity and advancement of the United States of America since 1776 other than the hand of Providence. In these difficult times, now more than ever, we should reaffirm "In God We Trust" as our official motto.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 13, rise today "Reaffirming 'In God We Trust' as the official motto of the United States" which would support and encourage the public display of the national motto in all public buildings, public schools, and other government institutions. This motto reflects our nation's rich history of religious freedom and tolerance.

More than three hundred years ago, bound by their common faith and desire for tolerance and liberty, a small group of pilgrims journeyed to America. They sought a place where they could safely and freely worship according to their own beliefs.

The tradition of religious freedom is one of the fundamental liberties upon which our na-

tion was founded. The founding document of our nation, The Declaration of Independence, states that men are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Reaffirming 'In God We Trust' as the national motto does not violate these rights; instead, this is an acknowledgement of our nation's unwavering commitment to religious freedom.

The English word God does not exclusively refer to a Christian God or God from any one religion. There are names of God in a variety of religious traditions throughout the world, including Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, indigenous African religions, and Native American religions. In all of these diverse faiths, names of God are invoked to address the Supreme Being or deity in liturgy and prayer. In fact, the word God is defined as referring to the Supreme Being, the creator and ruler of the universe. This definition does not imply that God is tied to a specific religion, but rather unique to individual faith traditions.

We are a diverse nation, filled with people from around the world, people of varying backgrounds, races and religions. In Houston, where I represent the 18th Congressional District, 44 percent of the population is Hispanic, and 25 percent are African Americans. Houston is also home to the third largest Vietnamese community in the country, as well as the 5th largest Indonesian population, and a sizeable community of individuals from Nigeria, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Norway. Within these diverse cultural backgrounds, there are many different religions, faiths and customs.

The 18th Congressional District recently made great progress in celebrating all of Houston's religions. On October 18, 2011, Houston's Institute of Interfaith Dialog broke ground for the Houston Interfaith Peace Garden, a multi religious center. The goal of the organization and the Peace Garden is the promotion of understanding among different faiths through shared experiences.

As my constituents in the 18th Congressional District have shown, promoting understanding between religions strengthens communities, and unites Americans. For centuries, religion has been a comfort to people in tragedy, and way to celebrate in triumph. Reaffirming "In God We Trust" as the national motto is a reaffirmation of faith, a reaffirmation of a creator and Supreme Being, and uniting all religions under the comfort this brings. However, in no way should this legislation or my vote for H. Con. Res. 13 deny the superior constitutional standing of the 1st Amendment of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion in the United States of America.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 13, a resolution to reaffirm "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States of America. Though the motto itself was not officially adopted until 1956, the saying has long been a part of our nation's history and its sentiment has prevailed much longer than that.

Since its onset, America the Beautiful has been a Nation of Faith. Now, as our country faces a fatigued economy, high unemployment, and a challenging budget situation, our continued trust in God is critical and must not wane. Like the battle-worn American flag that first inspired Francis Scott Key to write "In

God is our trust!" during the war of 1812, our faith in God must remain steadfast through the dark times.

It is fitting that we consider H. Con. Res. 13 today, because on this day in history 234 years ago, Congress similarly considered a resolution recognizing "the superintending providence of Almighty God" in developing our nation.

The First National Proclamation of Thanksgiving, issued by the Continental Congress on November 1, 1777, recommended that President George Washington set aside December 18th the following year as a day for "solemn thanksgiving and praise." The resolution further declared that such a day might:

"please [God] graciously to afford his blessings on the governments of these states respectively, and prosper the public council of the whole; to inspire our commanders both by land and sea, and all under them, with that wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit instruments, under the providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States the greatest of all blessings, independence and peace and

"that it may please Him to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people and the labor of the husbandman, that our land may yield its increase; to take schools and seminaries of education, so necessary for cultivating the principles of true liberty, virtue and piety, under his nurturing hand, and to prosper the means of religion for the promotion and enlargement of that kingdom which consisteth in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Mr. Speaker, just as we did 234 years ago today, let us recognize the undeniable hand of God in cultivating our great nation, and give thanks for the mercies he has bestowed on us throughout our history. Let us also reaffirm today, not just the text of our national motto, but that truly "In God is our trust."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 13.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

WIRELESS TAX FAIRNESS ACT OF 2011

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1002) to restrict any State or local jurisdiction from imposing a new discriminatory tax on cell phone services, providers, or property, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1002

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Wireless Tax Fairness Act of 2011".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) It is appropriate to exercise congressional enforcement authority under section 5 of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and Congress' plenary power under article I, section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States (commonly known as the "commerce clause") in order to ensure that States and political subdivisions thereof do not discriminate against providers and consumers of mobile services by imposing new selective and excessive taxes and other burdens on such providers and consumers.

(2) In light of the history and pattern of discriminatory taxation faced by providers and consumers of mobile services, the prohibitions against and remedies to correct discriminatory State and local taxation in section 306 of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (49 U.S.C. 11501) provide an appropriate analogy for congressional action, and similar Federal legislative measures are warranted that will prohibit imposing new discriminatory taxes on providers and consumers of mobile services and that will assure an effective, uniform remedy.

SEC. 3. MORATORIUM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No State or local jurisdiction shall impose a new discriminatory tax on or with respect to mobile services, mobile service providers, or mobile service property, during the 5-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) MOBILE SERVICE.—The term "mobile service" means commercial mobile radio service, as such term is defined in section 20.3 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, or any other service that is primarily intended for receipt on, transmission from, or use with a mobile telephone or other mobile device, including but not limited to the receipt of a digital good.

(2) MOBILE SERVICE PROPERTY.—The term "mobile service property" means all property used by a mobile service provider in connection with its business of providing mobile services, whether real, personal, tangible, or intangible (including goodwill, licenses, customer lists, and other similar intangible property associated with such business).

(3) MOBILE SERVICE PROVIDER.—The term "mobile service provider" means any entity that sells or provides mobile services, but only to the extent that such entity sells or provides mobile services.

(4) NEW DISCRIMINATORY TAX.—The term "new discriminatory tax" means a tax imposed by a State or local jurisdiction that is imposed on or with respect to, or is measured by, the charges, receipts, or revenues from or value of—

(A) a mobile service and is not generally imposed, or is generally imposed at a lower rate, on or with respect to, or measured by, the charges, receipts, or revenues from other services or transactions involving tangible personal property;

(B) a mobile service provider and is not generally imposed, or is generally imposed at a lower rate, on other persons that are engaged in businesses other than the provision of mobile services; or

(C) a mobile service property and is not generally imposed, or is generally imposed at a lower rate, on or with respect to, or measured by the value of, other property that is devoted to a commercial or industrial use and subject to a property tax levy, ex-

cept public utility property owned by a public utility subject to rate of return regulation by a State or Federal regulatory authority;

unless such tax was imposed and actually enforced on mobile services, mobile service providers, or mobile service property prior to the date of enactment of this Act.

(5) STATE OR LOCAL JURISDICTION.—The term "State or local jurisdiction" means any of the several States, the District of Columbia, any territory or possession of the United States, a political subdivision of any State, territory, or possession, or any governmental entity or person acting on behalf of such State, territory, possession, or subdivision that has the authority to assess, impose, levy, or collect taxes or fees.

(6) TAX.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term "tax" means a charge imposed by a governmental entity for the purpose of generating revenues for governmental purposes, and excludes a fee imposed on a particular entity or class of entities for a specific privilege, service, or benefit conferred exclusively on such entity or class of entities.

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term "tax" does not include any fee or charge—

(i) used to preserve and advance Federal universal service or similar State programs authorized by section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254); or

(ii) specifically dedicated by a State or local jurisdiction for the support of E-911 communications systems.

(c) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) DETERMINATION.—For purposes of subsection (b)(4), all taxes, tax rates, exemptions, deductions, credits, incentives, exclusions, and other similar factors shall be taken into account in determining whether a tax is a new discriminatory tax.

(2) APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES.—Except as otherwise provided in this Act, in determining whether a tax on mobile service property is a new discriminatory tax for purposes of subsection (b)(4)(C), principles similar to those set forth in section 306 of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (49 U.S.C. 11501) shall apply.

(3) EXCLUSIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act—

(A) the term "generally imposed" as used in subsection (b)(4) shall not apply to any tax imposed only on—

(i) specific services;

(ii) specific industries or business segments; or

(iii) specific types of property; and

(B) the term "new discriminatory tax" shall not include a new tax or the modification of an existing tax that either—

(i)(I) replaces one or more taxes that had been imposed on mobile services, mobile service providers, or mobile service property; and

(II) is designed so that, based on information available at the time of the enactment of such new tax or such modification, the amount of tax revenues generated thereby with respect to such mobile services, mobile service providers, or mobile service property is reasonably expected to not exceed the amount of tax revenues that would have been generated by the respective replaced tax or taxes with respect to such mobile services, mobile service providers, or mobile service property; or

(ii) is a local jurisdiction tax that may not be imposed without voter approval, provides for at least 90 days' prior notice to mobile service providers, and is required by law to be collected from mobile service customers.

SEC. 4. ENFORCEMENT.

Notwithstanding any provision of section 1341 of title 28, United States Code, or the