

Bless the schools

SALENA DE LA CRUZ
Opinion Editor

"God Bless America" is a phrase that has become synonymous with patriotism and Americans since our nation's biggest tragedy. However, in a time when we should be standing together, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has demanded our show of pride to be removed from an elementary school in Rocklin, California.

We as a nation and as families teach our children the morals and values they should have. By deeming God inappropriate for school, what are we telling them? We are telling them the very beliefs we prided ourselves on sharing with them are no longer conventional. Why? Haven't we taught our children enough values that it should be their decision as to whether or not they want these values a part of their lives?

Personally, I would much rather have prayer heard in the rafters than hate and violence.

I commend the superintendent of Breen Elementary, Kevin Brown, for standing his ground on this issue. He let the ACLU know, "That's non-negotiable." Because he saw that we may not have a future to look forward to if we continue passing onto our children

the idea that saying, "God Bless America" may be patriotic, but you are not allowed to voice it.

What amazes me is that one woman wanted a sign that said, "God Bless America" to be taken down. The sign did not say, "kill all who don't follow me." One single solitary person believed it wrong and contacted the ACLU, and they in turn demanded the sign be taken down. Shame on you.

There was an article in the *Washington Post* by Charles Lane on Oct. 12, 2001 stating the ACLU was considering legal actions. As of now they are too little, too late.

I am happy to report that on Oct. 16, 2001, the 107th Congress, in its first session, unanimously passed HCON 248 EH, which states, "Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), that it is the sense of Congress that public schools may display the words 'God Bless America' as an expression of support for the nation."

I believe wholeheartedly in my rights and those of everyone around me, even children, and if that means allowing themselves to decide what's right and wrong for them, so be it.

I'll be waving my flag, showing my colors, and singing my praise to God and the nation. "God Bless America." Amen.



ACLU has valid concerns

DAN MERYS
Staff Writer

The American Civil Liberties Union's decision to contest the placement of banners containing the phrase "God Bless America" in schools such as Breen Elementary School in Rocklin, CA is entirely justified in my view.

While it's a nice sentiment that shows support for the people of New York and acts as a rallying cry that says to the terrorists "We will not be beaten," it is an endorsement of religion by a public school. Over the past 76 years the ACLU has been involved in a bitter battle to have religious overtones removed from public schools. Leaving this banner up is an attack on 76 years of progress.

The U.S. Supreme Court has held that prayer and The Ten Commandments have no place in schools. "Courts have generally said that, up to a certain vaguely defined point, what they call 'ceremonial deism' is okay," said Eugene Volokh, a UCLA law professor. However, I believe this is completely unacceptable, not to mention that the phrase "In God We Trust" appears on U.S.

currency and all over federal buildings.

Saying "God Bless America" may give you a warm fuzzy feeling, but when it alienates those who don't believe in God and those who believe in a different god, it's got to go. Some think that this is an extreme point of view, but take it to the other extreme. Place banners with phrases like "Vishnu(a Hindu God) Bless America" or "Satan Loves America." No school has enough room to place banners touting every religious position in America. So the only reasonable solution is to remove the banners altogether.

These signs also make some people uncomfortable. If every time you turned a corner you saw a six by eight-foot banner telling you how different you were, would really feel like sticking around? No. I didn't think so. That's not the kind of environment that's conducive to mental and emotional growth.

So the debate is one of practicality and tact. If someone is going to suffer because of the good intentions of another, the simplest solution is to remove the problem paraphernalia.

SHOULD "GOD BLESS AMERICA" BE POSTED AT SCHOOLS?



J.R. Richardson

"Sure, why not? I don't see anything wrong with it."



John Meyers

"Sure, because right now everybody should be united. It's the thing for everyone to feel safe under."

Photos and quotes compiled by Mike Pollock and Maggie Jirasek



Brianna Carney

"Yeah, originally we are a nation under God. Comforting thing to have at school."



David Gibler

"Sure. That's a tough question. The majority of people believe in God. His blessing would help."



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