



Atheists. Humanists. Freethinkers. **Americans.**

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July 20, 2006

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Pelosi

Thank you for your strong support of legislation regarding the separation of church and state. As you well know, on July 19, 2006, you led efforts in the attempt to override the presidential veto on embryonic stem cell research (HR 810) and to prevent court stripping regarding the Pledge of Allegiance (HR 2389). You also voted against transferring the property around the Mt. Soledad Easter Cross (HR 5683) to the federal government, even though the majority of your Democratic colleagues voted in favor of this political stunt to delay the removal of this unconstitutional endorsement of Christianity.

However, while speaking on the House floor against HR 2389, you stated “We all agree – ‘one Nation, under God’ – what a beautiful pledge. We all agree.” Ms. Pelosi – we do NOT all agree. In fact, American atheists and agnostics (estimated at over 60 million citizens) do not subscribe to the idea that we are “one Nation, under God.”

By making this statement, you perpetuate the myth that this constituency does not exist or is not truly American. Humanists, atheists, freethinkers, agnostics, and other nontheists are tired of being ignored or wished away. We exist, we make significant contributions to America, and we demand to be recognized.

Also, your embrace of “one Nation, under God,” as ancient and modern history clearly demonstrates, is dangerous.

Your support of the politicization of religion in the pledge, encourages dangerous policy decisions. Political leaders who profess to behave based on what their God has told them to do, or who foolishly lead with the belief that “divine providence” will protect them, have made, and continue to make, egregious policy misadventures both foreign and domestic.

The religious actions of our elected officials are then embraced by their constituents so when the children of atheists and agnostics are beaten in their public schools, or excluded from football teams for not attending church, those mistreating them are confident that they are acting “under God.”

Lastly, I wanted to think that your declaration regarding the Pledge was just a misstatement made in the heat of the floor debate; however, your very public reprimand of Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) for omitting the words “under God” while leading the Congress in the Pledge in 2004 demonstrates this statement was not an anomaly.

Many patriotic atheists and agnostics have expressed their patriotism by proudly reciting the original Pledge of Allegiance. The pre-1954 version was truly a declaration of our one nation being indivisible. Attempts to divide us between those who believe we are “under God” and those who do not, have not stopped nontheistic Americans from proudly serving our nation, and proudly asserting our patriotism.

I urge you to rethink the use of your language and your stance on this issue. You were elected to represent all your constituents both theists and nontheists.

Thank you again for your leadership and commitment to the separation of church and state. I will call your office to arrange a meeting to discuss these matters with you and your staff in more detail.

Sincerely,

Lori Lipman Brown
Director