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## Congressman Todd Akin Proposes Permanent Approach to Pledge of Allegiance Controversy

Washington, D.C. -Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO) today called the Supreme Court's decision to throw out a challenge to the reference 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance good news for our nation and our nation's children, but noted that more permanent action is needed to prevent future litigation against the important cultural symbol.

Congressman Akin has also introduced the Pledge Protection Act (HR 2028), which would protect American's free speech by removing jurisdiction of lower federal courts to rule on the Pledge of Allegiance. The power of Congress to limit the jurisdiction of the lower federal courts is granted in Article III of the Constitution. The Pledge Protection Act currently has 224 cosponsors.

"While the Court correctly dismissed the challenge brought by Mr. Newdow based on his lack of legal standing, the Court effectively side-stepped the larger constitutional question, which leaves the door open for a future challenge. It would, therefore, be prudent for Congress to enact a provision that would prevent future lawsuits in lower federal courts.

"The idea that there is a God, and that God grants rights to humankind and that the essential purpose of government is to protect these rights is a fundamental principle. It is also a principle that is central to our Nation's Declaration of Independence. It is time for Congress to take positive steps to protect the freedom of Americans to express their allegiance to this principle. That is why I have introduced the Pledge Protection Act. The act would guarantee the right of children to say the phrase 'under God' while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance by restricting the jurisdiction of lower federal courts from ruling on the constitutionality of the pledge.

"By passing the Pledge Protection Act Congress would be reaffirming the rightful use of the phrase 'under God' as an important part of America's culture and history while preserving the pledge from future litigation, which is something that today's Supreme Court decision has not yet accomplished."