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**Akin Introduces Pledge Protection Act of 2002**

Legislation removes lower courts' jurisdiction regarding the Pledge of Allegiance

Washington, D.C.- Today, Congressman Todd Akin will introduce the Pledge Protection Act of 2002. The bill will prevent lower federal courts from ruling on the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge Protection Act states: "No court established by Act of Congress shall have jurisdiction to hear or determine any claim that the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, as set forth in section 4 of title 4, violates the first article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

The authority of Congress to regulate the jurisdiction of federal courts is provided in Article III of the US Constitution noted Akin. "Congress has the ability to rein in a renegade judiciary," said Akin. "It is a tool not often used, yet the egregious decision by the Ninth Circuit Court calls for its use now."

"The decision that the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional reflects a misinterpretation of our Constitution," said Akin. "Belief in a Creator was central to the ideas upon which our nation was founded. To suggest that listening to the Pledge of Allegiance harms any child is absurd. To block schools from allowing the pledge ads arrogance to the absurdity."

"This bill will do more than merely resolve the controversy over the pledge," said Akin. "It will address a dangerous trend: a judiciary that too often confuses the freedom for religion with freedom from religion."