

Monday, January 31, 2004 - Montana 59th Legislative Session  
Rachel Roberts, Government Affairs Lobbyist - Montana Family Foundation  
Senate Judiciary Committee - SB 2

EXHIBIT 4  
Date 1-31-05  
Bill No. SB 2

Good Morning Chairman Wheat & Members of the Committee

In 2003, a senior in high school anticipated his Boy Scout Eagle Project by hanging over 50 "In God We Trust" National Motto posters in many of the classrooms and offices at the public school of Stevensville, Montana.

September, 16, 2003 - A local Stevensville attorney, along with her daughter that attended the same high school, sent a letter of complaint to the school superintendent who had approved the Eagle Project. She said the posters, ". . . are very disruptive to my daughter's education and are not conducive to her learning or educational process."

September 29, 2003 - Action was taken by the General Council for the Montana School Board Association, that wrote the superintendent and advised him to remove all the posters despite the fact that no court in this land has ruled such display was a violation of the, so-called, "separation of church and state."

In fact the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the Motto serves the honorable purpose of "expressing confidence in the future and encouraging the recognition of what is worthy of appreciation in society". [Lynch v. Donnelly, 465 U.S. 668, 693 (1984)]

Moreover, the Supreme Court, in numerous cases, cited the national motto as an example of a constitutionally permissible expression of our nation's long tradition of faith in God. [See, e.g., Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U.S. 306, 313-14 (1952); Abington v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203, 303-04 (1963); Lynch v. Donnelly, 465 U.S. 668, 676-77, 693 (1984); County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union, 492 U.S. 573, 625 (1989).]

The fact of the matter is that if all historic documents were removed from the school that referenced God the school would no longer be able to display or recite the U.S. Constitution, the Montana Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Gettysburg Address, the National Motto or the singing of the National Anthem, a verse of which says: "And this be our motto: In God is our trust."

Tuesday, October 14, 2003 - The Stevensville School Board held a public meeting at the High School with an overwhelming attendance of 100 people. The chair allowed the school board members to share their views followed by public comment that strongly backed the high school seniors Boy Scout Eagle project. Perhaps will of the people? At close, the chair allowed the present policy of the National Motto to continue.

Incidents such as these remind us of the importance of our National Motto and the necessity of legislation like SB 2.