

'Under God' falls victim to political correctness

ANGELA LINDSAY



reminded that this is the United States of America, and we expect our citizens to be loyal to this country. If you dissent, there is plenty of uninhabited land on other continents on which you may reside.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

For many of us, we repeated this oath hundreds of times as we matriculated through at least the first twelve grades of our schooling. However, a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision ruled that the Pledge of Allegiance was unconstitutional because it contained the phrase "under God" and was, therefore, an endorsement of religion. The Constitution guarantees the "free exercise of religion", and, as such, the pledge and its reference to a Christian God ran afoul. But has political correctness run amuck? Lawmakers criticized this initial decision by the court as being "stupid", "outrageous", and "twisted". And it is.

Last month, Michael Newdow, an atheist, represented himself on behalf of his daughter in front of the U.S. Supreme Court during the appeals process of this case. He does not believe in God and feels that his daughter having to recite the pledge in her school with the phrase "under God" is a violation of the government's "separation of church and state" mandate. The Supreme Court has already ruled that schoolchildren cannot be forced to recite the pledge, but apparently that is not enough for Newdow. He wants the words gone.

Now, I am the first person to support the advocacy of individual rights, but this landmark legal action is sure to set the snowball effect of political correctness into motion. What next? Will "so help me God" be stricken from the oath taken by new presidents? Will witnesses have to refrain from placing their hand on the Bible and swearing to tell the truth in court? Or shall we change the inscription on our currency because it reads "In God We Trust"? This controversy has even reached the point where some lobby that the Pledge of Allegiance should be completely taken out of public schools all together—and to those latching on to this incongruous impulse, please be

Perhaps most disturbing is the possible effect this hullabaloo may have on Newdow's daughter who has been involuntarily thrust into the vortex of this senseless storm. She is too naïve to comprehend the magnitude of the debate of which she has become the center of attention, especially when the pursuit of a personal path towards a religious commitment is probably furthest from her young mind. She, unfortunately, stands to suffer inevitable ridicule and disdain from her peers—a fate which could have been avoided. The effect of schoolchildren ceremoniously and voluntarily reciting these two words, despite their religious undertones, is benign and not half as incendiary as the firestorm their debate has created.

The recitation of the entire Pledge of Allegiance should officially and legally remain as a traditional and patriotic part of the daily lives of schoolchildren in America. Those students whose religion, if any, does not worship the Christian God, are already allowed to refrain from saying the phrase "under God" during the pledge, and students even have a choice now as to whether to recite the pledge at all. Therefore, to rattle the bones of America's forefathers by proposing that the court revamp a respectable ritual that has stood for generations is completely unnecessary, a waste of the court's time, and quite possibly an infringement on the rights of those who wish to execute the pledge in its totality.

The high court is expected to rule on this case by summer. But, regardless of their decision, it's going to take a higher power to get us out of this mess. As our nation wallows in the deadly throes of war and terrorism, the symbolism and power of the Pledge of Allegiance in its entirety becomes increasingly paramount. We, the people of the United States, can only trust that the Supreme Court will consider the interests of the nation as a whole over the personal politics of one faithless father.

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College presidents should stand up for affirmative action

By Ron Walters
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

When I was considering coming to the University of Maryland seven years ago, one of the major factors was that it had a president, Brit Kirwan, who was passionate about affirmative action. When the university's Benjamin Banneker Scholarship Program for African-American students was declared unconstitutional by the Fourth District Circuit Court, many questioned his decision to fight on, by appealing to the Supreme Court.

A decision by a Right-wing majority of the Supreme Court upheld the Fourth Circuit in 1995, but President Kirwan's courage stands as a model to other college presidents in the face of the current withering attack on the opportunity of blacks to attend college.

In his statement appealing the decision, Kirwan pointed out that the University of Maryland had resisted racial integration far into the 1970s, even though the Supreme Court had declared segregation unconstitutional at the undergraduate college of university in 1950. This meant that, as in other Southern states, although Blacks paid state and federal taxes, African-Americans had to attend predominantly black - and underfunded - colleges. This amounted to a massive transfer of resources, since those taxes paid by Blacks were used to build and maintain universities that blacks couldn't attend.

But as in other states, blacks had also been slaves in Maryland, and one of its most famous slaves, Frederick Douglass, details in his autobiography the painful story of how basic education was kept from him and other slaves. Now the scholarship program established at the flagship institution to correct this historical problem is called Banneker-Key (for Francis Scott Key) and is now open to other students who ancestors had not been slaves, some whose family may have been slave owners, and others who are already more than proportionally represented.

In the past few years, Right wing legal organizations, wrongly named the Center for Equal Opportunity and the Center for Individual Rights, have threatened universities in many states with law suits if they maintain racially identifiable programs. They have sent letters either directly to the universities or to the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, now also run by conservatives, complaining that such programs violate the law. As a result the colleges are caving in and closing them.

In 2003, Carnegie Mellon decided to open its summer enrichment program for blacks to whites and Asians. Both Harvard and Yale caved in after receiving letters from these legal organizations and Princeton and MIT followed suit. With these precedents the ripple effect has caused many universities to "rearrange" such programs and others are still under review to see if they comply with the latest Supreme Court decision.

Now another front in this war has been opened, aimed especially at state institutions of higher education. The National Association of Scholars, closely allied with the right wing, is sending letters to the presidents of state supported colleges requesting data pointedly addressed to the use of race in the admissions process. Armed with this data, they hope to go back into court to challenge the way in which some colleges are using affirmative action.

The sad thing is that some colleges

choose to close these programs not because they violate the law, but to avoid the hassle and expense of a defending a lawsuit.

I wish that during the Civil Rights Movement, change could come by simply writing a letter requesting that a college open up and integrate their student body, faculty and the staffs. It wasn't that easy and blacks faced strong resistance, having to use the courts to affect change. And even when they won a decision, it was years before entrance requirements were "rearranged" so they could enter in sufficient numbers approaching anything resembling proportional equality.

As we celebrate the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954 and its companion 1971 decision, Adams v. Richardson, that helped to integrate colleges and uni-

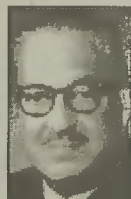
versities, it is worth remembering that ultimately it was not just the law which made it possible, it was courage. It was the courage of black lawyers such as Thurgood Marshall and his team of NAACP legal eagles; it was the courage of Supreme Court Justices and especially Chief Justice Earl Warren. And yes, it was the courage of white administrators and community leaders who saw the justice in the claim of Blacks to the equal high equality education that had been denied them.

This generation of university officials, however, appears to be too easy to intimidate. Racially identifiable programs are not unconstitutional, yet they hop to it when the right wing growls. But rather than sitting back and handling these challenges after they occur, our civil rights leadership should help them find their backbone.

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Walters



Marshall



OUR VOICES

Same-sex unions result in HIV

I am so glad that you ran in your newspaper (March 27 Post articles on) gay rights and HIV/AIDS concerns.

It is hard to believe that people do not realize that they are both connected. We will never eradicate the HIV/AIDS epidemic as long as we close our eyes to what causes the disease - homosexual acts. It does not matter how one tries to "say it isn't so," rectal sex causes HIV/AIDS in homosexuals and heterosexuals.

If we really want to get a handle on the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we must stop condoning behavior that leads to the same. You cannot continue to introduce a clean cell (sperm) into a dirty area (rectum with E-coli) and not expect to have negative results.

As a medical person, I know that the body will defend itself against what is unnatural and what it considers a threat. In the case of rectal sex and all it entails, the body will fight against the invasion and eventually the immune system breaks down and HIV happens.

It is surprising to me that intelligent people do not recognize that this is what happens in homosexual acts. If homosexuals are allowed to marry, there will be more cases of AIDS. In a marital bond, people feel more freedom to have sex more frequently, thus increasing the chances for the development of HIV/AIDS. Using condoms in rectal sex will most times cause the latex to break and render the condom useless. The area is too restricted and not intended for anything to go into. It is intended only for the release of fecal matter and body waste.

God designed man and woman the way He did for a reason. It was never the intent to have same-sex people engaging in sexual acts. Woman's anatomy was made for man and man's anatomy for woman. It is believed that going against this godly arrangement will result in dire consequences in this life and the next. Black people, you should know better, regardless what Julian Bond, Al Sharpton, Coretta King, Carol Mosley Braun or John Lewis thinks. We know better!

Is the NAACP, under Julian Bond, using the monies sent to the NAACP for the defense of African American causes, being used to defend the homosexual agenda? It may be worth finding out.

Rev. Charlene Hendricks Charlotte



Bond

THE BOONDOCKS

by Aaron McGruder



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